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FAIR PLAY



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FAIR PLAY

THE GAMES OF MERRIE ENGLAND

by

RUDOLF KIRCHER

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Translated by R. N. Bradley



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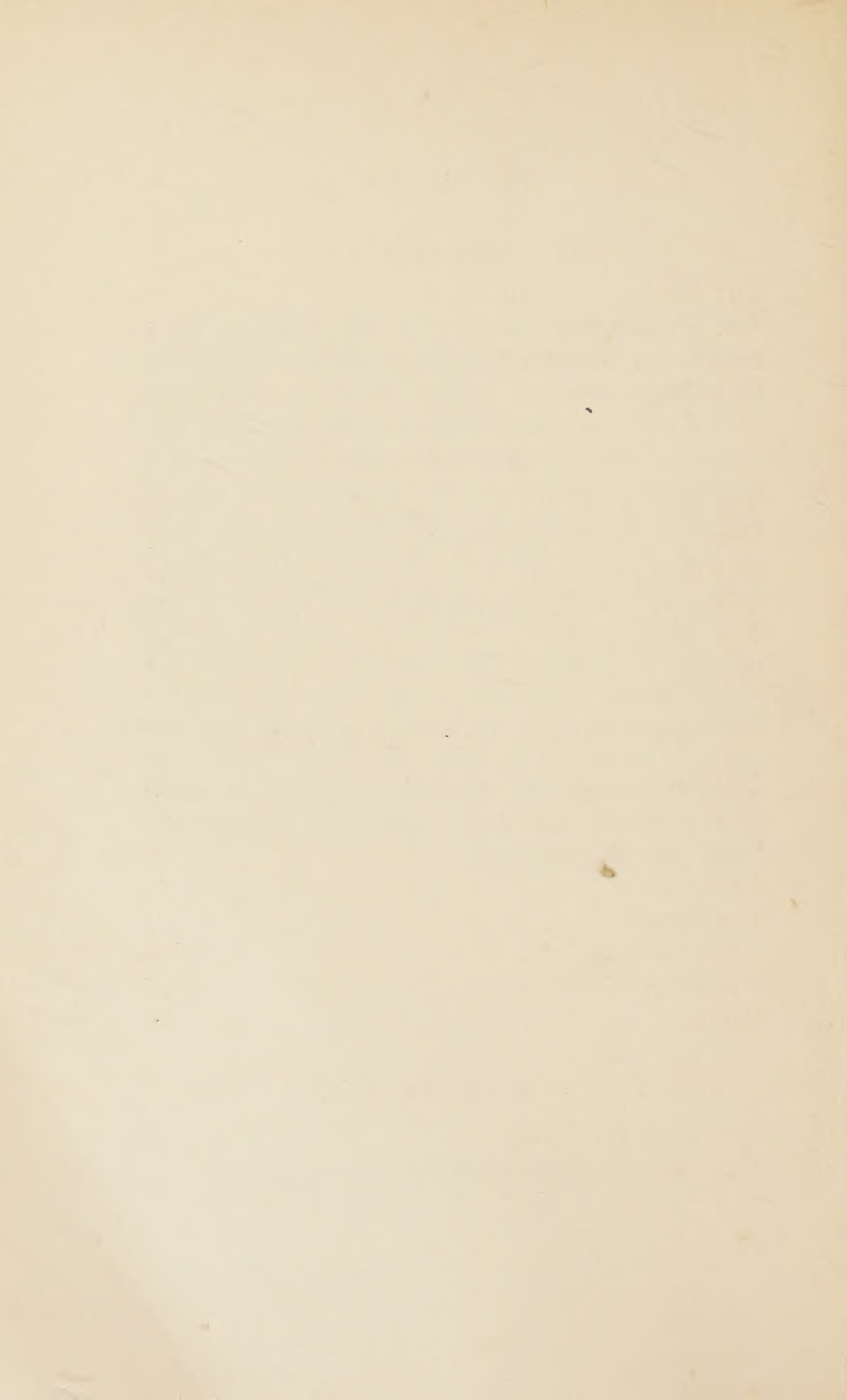
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PREFACE

WE in Germany are on the way to becoming a nation of sportsmen, and it is not difficult to suppose that long before us England trod the same path.

We can learn something from her example, and certain questions naturally arise : What have England's experiences been in sport, what are its evolutionary tendencies, and what part is played by it in English life and the lives of the masses ? This book attempts to answer these questions. It is not the author's fault if the reader is carried outside the sphere of pure sport into an atmosphere which some sportsmen may find uncongenial. Developments which have taken place in England make it necessary to give the word "play" its widest interpretation. In so far, however, as world-wide activities are dealt with, their significance holds good for England.

R. K.



CONTENTS

SPORT AND INTELLECT

	PAGE
THE OBJECT OF THIS BOOK	3
THE PLAY-ATTITUDE	5
SPORT AND INTELLECT	10
FAIR PLAY	16

DEMOCRATISING SPORT

THE RIGHT TO PLAY	23
ENGLISH SPORTS-GROUNDS	28
SELF-ORGANISATION	35
ARMY, CHURCH AND SPORT	39
THE WEEK-END	44
WOMEN AND SPORT	48

THE SPORTS AND THEIR PUBLIC

THE MYSTERIES OF CRICKET	57
THE FOOTBALL CROWD	65
GOLF AND TENNIS	73
ATHLETICS	81
THE RIVER	85
"HORSE-SENSE"	90
DERBY DAY	97
PREMIERLAND	109

THE YOUNGER GENERATION AT PLAY

SPORT IN THE SCHOOL	117
THE BOY SCOUT MOVEMENT	123

THE PLAY-ATTITUDE IN DRAMA		PAGE
REMOVING A MISCONCEPTION		133
THE REVOLT OF THE AMATEUR		142
EURIPIDES IN THE VILLAGE		152
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NEW MOVEMENT		160
THE MUSICAL REVIVAL		
RHYTHM		171
MUSICAL TRADITION IN ENGLAND		177
MUSIC AS SPORT		192
MUSIC AND EDUCATION		197
THE GAME OF LIFE		
SENSE OF HUMOUR		203
THE POLITICAL GAME		207
ENGLISH LIFE		212
A FORECAST		217

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
Sport in the West End	14
Sport in the East End	30
Woman in Sport	50
Sport and Society—Lord's Cricket Ground	62
The Masses as Spectators	68
The Bishop of London	78
Henley Regatta	86
Derby Day	102
The Heir to the Throne	110
The Championship of the School	118
"Oliver Twist" in the Factory Yard	134
Strike Days in a Mining Village	144
"Hippolytus" in the Village Barn	156
Folk-dancing in Scotland	174
Community Singing	195
Eton Boys	214

SPORT AND INTELLECT

THE OBJECT OF THIS BOOK

ALTHOUGH sport is a variety of play, yet play is a thing which extends far beyond the domain of sport. We think of England as the home of sport, but in speaking of the English as a sports-loving people we are apt to forget that English sport forms only part of a far wider conception, only one aspect, in fact, of the natural disposition to play, found among all peoples, and impelling them to activities which have little to do with a football match. Thus the Englishman's impulse to play is not confined to athletics, but permeates the culture of the whole nation. It would be an injustice to English sport, its character and national significance, to regard it as an independent phenomenon, apart from its intellectual aspects ; English sport is immediately and inseparately bound up with the whole life of the people.

Broadly speaking, sport and intellect in England can no more be divorced from each other than can athletics from the more artistic forms of play. Looking at sport alone we are apt to picture it in a guise which would do injustice to the English character. The sporting press gives a false impression, and one is apt to be misled by the developments of the last sixty or eighty years during which England, with a vastly increased population, has

applied capitalistic mass-production to an essentially individualistic activity, and allowed professionalism to overshadow amateur performance.

This tendency seems to be on the wane and amateurism is coming into its own again. The sphere of athleticism will widen as sport becomes more popular with the masses, but a rivalry is growing up in drama and music. Play of the latter kind, allied to sport yet subtly distinct from it, has in the few years since the war reached a significance among the masses which twenty years ago few would have regarded as possible or even probable. Both the new kind of play—new, that is to say, for the present time—and the old, appeal to the same class of people.

All English national games are based upon a common foundation of social and civic spirit. Sport and play in England are not merely exercise for mind and body, but aim at making the individual a useful member of a unified whole, and such a unity of state and society is only possible if "Fair Play" is observed. Thus the review of English sport leads us automatically into a realm where results, records and mere athleticism are merely incidental to a wide culture. We are faced with a wide conception which has a purely English significance : to use a philosophical term, the "play-attitude" of the English people.

THE PLAY-ATTITUDE

"THERE are moments in our life," says Schiller in his *Minor Philosophical Works*, "in which we pay a loving tribute to Nature, whether she be manifested in plants, rocks, animals or landscapes ; in children, in the customs of people or of the primeval world. This is not because she gratifies our senses nor yet because she satisfies our understanding or taste (and the reverse can happen in both cases), but merely because she is Nature." These words exactly express the happy naturalism of the British play-attitude. We are all aware of the play-spirit, a fundamental possession of all human beings, even when, unfortunately perhaps, their intellect represses it. All peoples have their play, but none of the great modern nations has built it up in quite the same way into a rule of life and a national code. The British have given free rein to their play-instinct, but, while confining it by rules, they have not thwarted its natural development. Here and there, under Puritan influence, play has been forcibly repressed, but such repression was temporary and had little effect on developments in other directions. It is this natural evolution of the play-spirit which has given English character its most interesting features and from the political, cultural and broadly human point of view, its

most important aspect. This may be summed up as a sportsman's attitude towards all the problems of life and a peculiarly cheerful and naïve philosophy, so elusive and incomprehensible to the foreign observer. Understand the Englishman's play-attitude and you have the key to modern England, its life, culture, the psychology of its sports and games, and the peculiar outlook on the whole of life arising therefrom.

The play-attitude is essentially naïve. English games are not "made," nor are they necessarily organised ; they are entirely natural. In whatever sphere, sport, drama or music, they have arisen as naïve expressions of natural instinct. "The naïve is childishness occurring where least expected." In writing this, Schiller had no thought of England, but if he had been describing English character he could not have been more to the point. The English language has no word to define the most English characteristic. We have to borrow it from the French, *naïveté*. And it was in looking for something little in keeping with their own character that they discovered it. But, with the English, *naïveté* is a permanent quality. Play gives them the means of retaining happy childhood right into old age. It is nowadays everywhere the fashion, and a very pleasant one, to appear, and inwardly to be, younger than the calendar permits or our grandfathers could have expected. In England this fashion is no discovery ; it arose suddenly from the sense of empty boredom in the war years and from the still more

inane hypocrisy of over-respectable ancestors. In England the male sex at least had set out upon such a path before the advent of this war-made fashion ; boyishness and youth have long been a British cult. Symptomatic of the tendency is the clean-shaven face, for what but the desire for youthful appearance induced Alexander the Great, "the first clean-shaven man," to use a razor ? Reaction against leaden Puritanism has been mainly instrumental in stimulating the Hellenistic spirit, the cult of physical beauty, the play-attitude of the ancients, which ranged from the theatre to the arena. Human nature carves out its path urged on by a desire for free rhythm and new harmonies in the interplay of mind and body ; such harmony is only obtainable when one can remain naïve, and make sport merely a link between the physical and the intellectual ; when one can keep in the background not only artificial organisation and its excesses, but athletic exaggeration ; in short, when the play-attitude achieves more than a brilliant kick or an absurd record. To have achieved such harmony, in their own way and not without some trembling of the balance, is the merit of the English people. In the past Puritanism, often unconsciously and unintentionally, has been the most dangerous enemy to the development of childlike naïveté in the British character. In our own time the greatest danger and rival has been the commercialisation of sport.

In the field of sport England has returned to both natural and national paths, but the nation is

beginning to get back, in the same natural manner, to all other kinds of play as well. Thus a wide vista is opened up, for the motive force behind this childlike simplicity is, like everything fundamentally natural, potential artistic power and a mainspring of national culture. England's most valuable intellectual and artistic achievements have always been based on a popular foundation, and the same can almost be said of English art. Herein lie its limitations no less than its imperishable value. The play-attitude is the link of association. The simple and happy outlook on life cannot fail to impose its limitations on intellectual activity. Aversion from philosophic speculation can be explained by mental inertia and lack of interest, and even the climate may be in some degree responsible, just as it is for the keenness of sport itself. The warm humidity of the English atmosphere has a somnolent effect ; the blood courses slowly through the veins and cries to be stirred up. It is true that in England everybody does not join in the so-called intellectual life, often hardly distinguishable from snobbery, but no one can deny that, in the general ebb and flow, the Anglo-Saxons have made their contribution to humanity's intellectual achievements. India has her exclusive caste system, and Plato envisaged clear-cut professional distinctions in his Utopian state. But while the English are not yet officially classified under the categories of flannelled fools, shopkeepers and civil servants, yet in practice one occasionally comes across a species of intellectual self-denial approximating

to something of the sort. Moreover, we have to reckon with a love of pleasure which grows in significance the more deeply it permeates the masses. Yet often enough there is a perfectly natural reason for the aversion from unnecessary intellectualism, and the reason is just that simple gaiety, the play-attitude towards life, an instinctive naturalism, which makes existence a game, defying all fate's buffets, social and political alike, with unparalleled courage. By virtue of their play-sense the English have acquired certain qualities which are as precious to themselves as they are pleasing to others ; a rare sense of humour, making life always worth living, meeting its blows with laughter ; on the other hand, remarkable social and moral gifts, the result of team work, that is to say manly rivalry under the ægis of fair play.



SPORT AND INTELLECT

APPEAL to the Englishman's desire to play and you touch the soul of the nation. If body and soul can be separated, it is not here below. England is a place where the highest dignitaries of the Church wield tennis-racquet and golf-club. In a country where this is possible some sort of compromise between intellectual culture and physical activity has necessarily been attempted and, on the whole, we may say that it has been successful. It is true that England has her simple-minded monomaniacs whose whole outlook is dominated by sport, who can live by nothing else. There are others whose sole aim is intellectual development. Neither is representative of England, who demands of her sons a combination of the two. Sport and play are essential constituents of English life. All exaggerations in English sport occur precisely where one-sidedness, typical of professionalism and the fanatic, predominates ; but it is neither record-breaking nor fanaticism which have made English sport a national institution.

Sport and play begin to degenerate as soon as they split a people into two camps, those for whom sport is a necessity and those who are too respectable, exalted or intellectual to be interested in mere athletics. English savants, artists, statesmen alike

wield club or racquet, and the clergy are seen by the score on race-courses or at football matches. The country's leaders find little popularity with the masses if they acquire a reputation for being too exalted or too holy to live like natural men. The Court descends to the level of the sporting public, not only because it can thus win laurels cheaply amid the general enthusiasm, but because the King and his sons are themselves keenly interested. Stanley Baldwin may not nowadays shine as a sportsman, but he is at least a good spectator; his pipe and his insatiable love of fresh air enhance his popularity. It is Lloyd George's ambition to shine as golfer, and it is well known how his sporting enthusiasm has involved him and M. Briand in international complications.

The venerable Lord Balfour, one of the country's intellectual lights, never misses an important tennis tournament, and sits there for whole afternoons; despite his years he is still a keen performer. With or without cigar, Lord Birkenhead also plays with both keenness and temperament. Winston Churchill does not object to falling off a horse occasionally, and it will be remembered that Ramsay MacDonald was temporarily expelled from his Scottish golf club during the war on the score of politics. Nevertheless, like a great number of Labour leaders, he too enjoys sport and games. Among English fly-fishers Lord Grey takes the lead. The Bishop of London, himself well on in years, recently travelled round the world and incidentally showed the Americans that if the

English could not beat Tilden, they were still in an unique sense a sporting people ; for what other bishop in the world could hope to figure with credit in an exhibition match along with Helen Wills ?

And as for those who cannot be active players owing to business or age, they are either past-masters, or at least know all about the game ; it arouses their old enthusiasm, and they sympathise warmly with the efforts of the younger generation. In this way they live over again their lost youth. In England there is no insurmountable barrier between father and son, teacher and pupil, even between employer and employed for, whatever else may separate, the passion for sport unites them. Here the schoolboy has no need to hide behind a tree while his form-master passes football field or tennis court, lest evil befall him on the morrow—I am reminded of my own schooldays ; on the contrary in England we find “ oars,” coveted prizes for rowing, or “ caps,” tokens of team-work in the field, replacing to no little extent the “ honours ” of the “ swots ” gained with energy no less fierce though by more tedious paths. Indeed at Cambridge the undergraduate must frankly choose between his examination and training, if only as reserve man, in the redoubtable eight which yearly rows against Oxford on the Thames. In either case a good appointment follows and in the latter usually a better one. In these matters college tutors are quite unbiassed and advise students in all wisdom and with a clear conscience.

They know well enough that a young man with a taste for athletics will do himself more good by excelling in this field than by a painful and unprofitable pursuit of an intellectual will-o'-the-wisp. Moreover, life only begins at the conclusion of the English education, and the great tasks offered by the empire, with its varied problems for the pioneer, often demand the strong energetic character rather than the bookworm. If learning has no attraction for a man, he leaves it alone ; others will follow soon enough to keep the eternal flame alight.

English culture knows no half-way house. The ignoramus is disconcerting from his lack of the veriest elements, while his opposite is often quite as tiresome by dint of the astounding range of his knowledge. But in the best Englishmen the physical and intellectual sides are combined ; while to the typical athlete intellectualism is a closed book, the intellectualist, if I may generalise, is no dry-as-dust arm-chair student, for sport generally plays a very important part in his life. And, turning to the younger generation, we find that scholarships and prizes often fall to the lot of the athlete, although perhaps owing to some indulgence on the part of the examiners.

Bookworms and highbrows who despise sport are comparatively rare. But, on the other hand, there are many English people who at school, college, or in later life, show a marked aversion from the purely athletic type who can only be approached through games and talk of games.

This is significant, for it shows that the cultured Englishman only tolerates sport when it is confined within reasonable bounds. This attitude is widespread, and by no means confined to the intelligentsia. Most fathers demand more of their sons than mere proficiency at games, yet instances of exaggeration on the sports side are common enough to justify the existence of certain fanatical critics. And they have their uses for, however unjust their criticism may be, it keeps constantly before the public mind the exaggerations and one-sidedness of sport. In so far, however, as these pessimists regard sporting keenness as a national misfortune, they show an utter failure to understand their own countrymen or to grasp the significance which play has for English life.

Lovers of games have the great consolation of finding themselves, by virtue of their athletic proficiency, in the company of churchmen, artists, poets, savants and statesmen, and it is the co-operation of the intellectuals which is mainly responsible for the fact that games bulk so largely in the national life ; it all follows from the first principle that joy in games, the impulse to play, and the play-attitude are the Englishman's life-blood. Moreover, the close association of sport and intellect provides a sufficient guarantee against exaggeration, since the organisation of play is not subject to the arbitrament of fanatics ; English games are always and of necessity evolved in accordance with the healthy sentiments of the community. Hence English sport is something truly national, and the best brains

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SPORT IN THE WEST END



are products of its school. Loyalty to one's school is an English characteristic, and sport is a school the Englishman never forgets ; throughout his life, as Cabinet Minister, bank director, peer or sturdy commoner, he remains its debtor, friend and well-wisher.



FAIR PLAY

WHEN an English publisher recently wrote a book light-heartedly giving away all his trade secrets, his astonished work-people asked him whether it was not unwise and unbusinesslike to disclose all this information for the benefit of his competitors. Such a procedure was beyond their comprehension, and light only dawned on them when he asked : "Do you think you can become good cricketers if Jack Hobbs shows you exactly how it is done !" The English language is a good vehicle of communication even in Wales where there are still tens of thousands who don't understand a word of it, but nothing in the world is so convincing to the Briton as sporting terminology. Superficially vague expressions like "playing the game," the covert censure implied in, "That is not cricket," and above all the classic postulate of "fair play" have a deep significance, and are essential factors in a national language which is as primitive as it is plastic. Such expressions do not merely mingle in the language like certain gems of doubtful purity from the city, army or school, gradually gaining acceptance in popular parlance ; they are natural concepts, embracing a wide field of example, reminiscence and admonition. The nation is so deeply imbued with sportsmanship that "playing

the game " does not mean merely what it says, but playing it in honour, dignity and according to all the rules. " Be a sport " is an appeal to a man's honour. Such an expression used during a game would be superfluous, for it is an understood thing, but " be a sport," " play the game," are appeals of daily life, requiring a man to apply the natural conventions of play to all other circumstances of life.

To-day the English morality is influenced less by the cleric's sermon than by the decision of the referee. Every English youngster understands that certain things, which from instinctive or practical motives he would like to do, simply must not and can not be done. The referee's whistle shrieks in his ears, and this may mean a penalty-kick or a lost goal. The word " foul " has an unpleasant sound, and the consequences of a petty meanness, if only reflected in the countenance of its victim, are so quickly and drastically detected in games that through the medium of sport the observance of rules and chivalry become a matter of necessity. Thus fair play becomes the keynote of English morality and the playing-field an incomparable moral training-ground. There is no walk of English life in which this appeal is not understood nor in the long run unheeded—even in politics. That there are exceptions, hypocrisy and back-biting, is immaterial to the main contention, which is, that sport has given the English people certain elementary conceptions and expressions, whose purport is incomparably stronger and

more universal than all the rules and injunctions which usually form a people's moral equipment. A patriotic slogan will give rise to misunderstanding and controversy out of proportion to its utility, but the simple terminology of the playing-field has been engraved upon the Englishman's table of commandments with a chisel of steel.

"Fair play" is a great conception, for in these two words are summed up all that English education and ethics hold most dear. The words are untranslatable, and it would be an injustice to cramp them into a rough and ready formula. The value of certain things lies in their very vagueness and lack of precision. The idea of fair play comprises a world of subtle implication and feeling, and the wider its interpretation the nearer we come to its significance as guide, ideal, philosophy and social wisdom. Every one, be he sportsman, soldier, politician, statesman, journalist, employer or employed, finds in these two words guidance and admonishment affecting the whole scope and meaning of his work. Fair play governs the relations with one's neighbours, especially in those things which put a man on his mettle, competition, war, rivalry and love. Fair play means regard for one's neighbour and seeing the man and fellow-player in one's opponent. Even the youngest English child learns that it is wrong to take advantage of the weak, and unmanly to ill-treat a beaten adversary. That the rôle of victor is not always easy the English nation has but recently experienced. Nevertheless, to the Englishman fairness is one of the noblest

duties, and the will to this end is strong enough to keep the English character steadily in the right path despite all temptations. The underlying motive is not kindness of heart but the instinct of fairness cultivated on the playing-field. What one often calls, not without envy, the Englishman's political gift, is at bottom no other than the natural exercise of this natural instinct. It is always this impulse which compels the Englishman, it may be after considerable wavering, to make the necessary last-moment concessions in the interests of common sense. Thus fair play is also the mainspring of the much lauded English common sense. In brief, sport is England's greatest teacher.



DEMOCRATISING SPORT

THE RIGHT TO PLAY

DESPITE the prevalence of the play-urge, the democratising of sport, if the expression is permissible, was in past generations never completely attained in England ; for the ever-increasing millions of the proletariat the play-attitude is not easily realised. It could never be said of England that games were the privilege of the idle rich, but for the masses a play-outlet was for a long period so difficult as to be, especially in the large towns, almost an impossibility. The whole day was taken up with work and tired men have little inclination to play, however much play may appeal to them in a general way.

Sunday used to be too sacred for games and recreation and, if one wanted to play, the question usually arose, where ? Villages and towns have extensive greens and commons, fields or parks, but games were not necessarily allowed there, and particularly the large towns felt the pinch. In all England's beauty spots the sign "Private" meets the eye ; her noble landscapes are intersected by the walls and fences of land-owners. If such a system has preserved the grace and beauty of the countryside, it has been at the expense of the commonalty. In any case the land question, aggravated by the problem of private ownership, was

long instrumental in retarding the growth of active sport among the masses : and the present determination to make up for past deficiencies is the clearest indication of the Englishman's consciousness of the situation. If the Church, Queen Victoria, and Capital were content with the hope of fobbing off the proletariat with life in "Coke-town," deprived of the pleasures and recreations of the squirearchy and the rich, such an aspiration was soon to be dissipated. The Victorian age may have achieved much, but it also neglected much. Social custom has lost its rigour and contrasts in consequence become more obvious. It is in games that the old unity is rediscovered. This common ground need never have been lost, for team-games are almost as old as England herself ; such games, consisting of matches between towns, villages, parishes, even streets, have persisted for centuries if only in the guise of tug-of-war.

Thus there came a time when the cry of the masses for sport and games became more and more insistent, while millions had no possibility of putting their desires into practice. As a consequence the rôle of spectator came to loom larger than that of player. So long as sport and play exist there will necessarily be spectators, but the spectator's part is barren unless it leads to imitation. There are some sports, particularly horse-racing, which are necessarily restricted to few actual participants, but it is significant that, precisely in these least happy phases where spectators bulk most largely,

gambling and drunkenness are found in an unexampled degree. Thus we find that, through social neglect, egoism and thoughtlessness, English sport has developed more and more in the direction of the Roman *circenses*, while the cinema and the mechanisation of music have hindered the development of active play in other directions. It was not the state, but private speculative enterprise, which provided the people with these shows. In the large towns sport became in its most important and popular aspects a money-making business. Instead of gladiators England provided professionals who, instead of being regarded as first-rate examples, and hence national instructors, became an end in themselves, an end which was often no other than "business as usual." On the other hand, a new feeling began to prevail among the huge masses of spectators, a sense of thrill for the whole event, with the result that looking-on became an end in itself.

Nevertheless these pathological symptoms were entirely superficial and the impetus to active play was by no means lost. In such things man retains his childishness and children always feel the desire to do and to play on their own account. This feeling may be baldly expressed by the words, Give us the chance to play! Millions are clamouring for it. They don't want the luxury of big clubs, schools and universities, only a patch of greensward. For the masses, private grounds are out of the question, and open spaces hopelessly

inadequate, they are full to overflowing. Suburban and village streets have long lost their charm as play-grounds for the young ; yet, despite their dangers under modern conditions, they are still the only sports-grounds open to hundreds of thousands. No less than four million children of the elementary schools have still no green field for cricket or football. For years a movement has been on foot to give these " lacklands " their natural rights. This is a novel plank in the democratic platform, and " the right to play " had already found its place among the political slogans. The National Playing Fields Association, founded in the summer of 1927, came into the field with a programme as serious as if it had been a question of universal suffrage or lost ground-rights. And in effect " lost ground-rights " is just the right expression, a political question of the first magnitude, a new conception even for the historic home of sport.

A fund of at least a million pounds is contemplated, for no pompous stadium, but for the purchase of land and the support of local organisations by money and advice in the acquisition of plots for the play of the masses. There is to be no bureaucracy, no red-tape. It is just a matter of opening so many playing-grounds, five acres at least being allotted to every thousand of the population. This is so far the greatest step taken towards democratising sport in England, the first nail in the coffin of those who would commercialise man's most original and natural activities. Sport is now

formally recognised under the auspices of the crown. The Prince of Wales is the chief supporter of the theory that the true sportsman must do his utmost to be a player and not merely a spectator ; and many a bruise on the royal body can testify to his firm adherence to this principle.



ENGLISH SPORTS-GROUNDS

THIS pampered land of sportsmen has no single sports-ground comparable in size and magnificence with the Frankfort Stadium, for example. This is only natural : if a tight hold is kept on the nation's purse-strings you have no national opera-houses, no high-schools of sport, no palatial sports-grounds for Tom, Dick or Harry. Private capital looks after itself and sports enthusiasts have not the means to build magnificent arenas for the people. Consequently the great mass of English sportsmen are modest in their demands. The more ambitious schemes are of quite recent date, and are quite distinct in idea and intention from those underlying the modern German sports-grounds ; they arise either from the necessities of club members, or from commercial enterprise bent on making money out of a particular form of sport by means of gate-money or letting its grounds. It has never even occurred to the English mind that the state, town council, or any one else, could provide them with a sports-ground offering everything their hearts desired, from swimming bath to football field.

The recognised homes of particular sports are in the main the football and cricket grounds of

the professional clubs. These are magnificently equipped, both in London and the provincial towns. They have extensive playing and practice grounds, and enormous stands, both covered and open, in addition to ample standing room. They have their refreshment rooms as a matter of course, and there is space for fifty, sixty, or seventy thousand spectators, and perhaps more. The professional clubs naturally have a large number of amateur members, and often in addition waiting-lists which run into tens of thousands of names. Such is the case with the Marylebone Cricket Club. Naturally, these clubs have large numbers of players, but these are insignificant compared with the huge total of sports enthusiasts among the masses. The so-called Stadium at Wembley, constructed after the war in connection with the British Empire Exhibition, does not fall into the same category. It consists of a huge concrete amphitheatre in the centre of which lies a grass plot. Although it has a capacity for a hundred thousand spectators, there is usually nothing to be seen there, for it is only used on exceptional occasions, such as the Cup Final of the Football Association or for military tournaments. In short the Stadium, like the whole of Wembley, is one of the misfires of commercial speculation. It looks as if an English Hollywood, a gigantic film-factory, will grow up in the exhibition grounds, while the Stadium will be taken over by a group of speculators for the latest London sport, dog-racing and betting. It is clear from

this that this particular Stadium is a modern creation of a special kind, having little in common with its Greek prototype.

The All-England Tennis Club, which owns the famous tournament ground at Wimbledon near London, is also admirably equipped. There are about two dozen beautifully kept grass courts, surrounded by dark hedges and green screens, lying side by side in long rows. Some are surrounded by open stands, while two of them lie apart in a veritable spectator's paradise. Of these the centre court, surrounded by open and covered stands, admits of over ten thousand spectators, and provides a good view to boot. As everywhere else in England there is ample provision here for lunch and, far more important, tea. Similar, though less fashionable, tennis-grounds are found in several other places, such as Queen's Club in West London, which has not only grass but covered and hard courts.

Semi-private or private grounds like these, of course, go a very short distance towards meeting the needs of the great mass of players, but one can always be a spectator. In these matters England is very individualistic; Heaven helps him who can help himself. And so the finest grounds belong to exclusive social clubs, which alone have the means to maintain them. One of the most important is the Ranelagh Club in South West London; its magnificent park is an ideal sports ground and contains fine polo-fields, extensive golf-courses, tennis-courts, croquet-lawns,

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SPORT IN THE EAST END

spacious club buildings with restaurants and every conceivable convenience for those who have time and money to spare. The nearest approach to this are the bigger golf clubs, but usually they devote themselves solely to this one game. They consist of a beautiful course, and a well-appointed club-house, and their example is followed by hundreds and thousands of larger or smaller clubs of every kind and for every sport. But, excellent as all this is for the members, it has no meaning for the millions of would-be players in England. So long as these aspirants are young their school helps in this direction, but, as I have said, up till now only too inadequately. Only the better-class schools are tolerably equipped with sports grounds, while magnificence in such matters is only attained by the leading public schools.

The new movement for providing facilities for games, especially the recent policy of the councils, promises an early increase in the number of public sports-grounds. Up to the present the London County Council alone has thrown open in its parks and gardens some 350 cricket-fields, 800 tennis-courts, and provided innumerable other facilities. But by far the greatest impetus to the movement has been given by business houses and industrial firms. Hotels, stores, banks, business houses, and industrial undertakings of every kind vie with each other in encouraging sport among their employees and work-people, and in this manner many new sports-grounds have grown up in the environs of the towns. In some cases the

accommodation is primitive, in others the last word in elegance and technique. Tea and dressing-rooms are seldom lacking, and some of the grounds are ablaze in the season with geraniums and roses. The leading business men have long realised that the time and money involved are as a rule fully compensated for by the closer social unity fostered among the departments. Nor do they confine their efforts to sport alone, but try to foster the social spirit by providing indoor games. In this direction the lead has been taken by one London store which houses and feeds its whole female staff in club-like premises—a not uncommon thing, by the way; its social efforts embrace games, dancing, education and entertainments, and every week or so the ballroom is thrown open to the girls' friends. The employer in question thinks he has the finest and most willing staff in London. Certainly his saleswomen, who number from four to five hundred, are among the politest and most obliging in that city, which is saying a great deal.

In addition the young people's organisations associated with the various places of worship, together with bodies like the Christian Students' Movement or the Y.M.C.A., have of late years looked after the social side with considerable adequacy, if in somewhat simple form; they provide facilities for football, cricket and tennis, and the grounds are equipped with dressing-rooms and the inevitable deck-chairs.

The vast majority of these miscellaneous

sportsgrounds are more or less improvised ; a piece of grass-land is hired and a hut erected. The football and cricket grounds which come into existence in this way are very different from their great prototypes. The Englishman does not grumble if his football-ground is on a slope, nor if his improvised tennis-court is an uneven plot composed of tussocks. The rugby player seems to prefer a bog to play in. In a football match the goal-keepers sometimes stand ankle deep in mud. "Don't worry." The game's the thing. When wants are so small sport can spread more rapidly, and the landed gentry meet the masses half-way by throwing open fields, parks and heaths. Two chalk lines are often enough to convert a pasture into a playing-field. There is no net, and a vigorously kicked football has to be chased the whole length of the field ; the cricket-ball bounces alarmingly along the pitch, but it is all taken as a matter of course. At Wimbledon the turf cannot be too short and fine, it is like green velvet ; at Ascot the horses run on a track which is luxuriously tended. The turf of Lord's cricket ground is like a good tennis court ; if play is stopped by rain, the ground near the stumps is as carefully covered as the Centre Court at Wimbledon. Football grounds, even the more important ones, do not require such a fine surface, but to continental minds they seem near enough to perfection. But this extreme care is an exception, and the great mass of players are content with what they can get. So long as they can play on it, they take the ground for granted. They even take

the weather for granted—you hardly ever hear of a football match being stopped by rain. The poor man's cricket has to be played on wet pitches if the weather is unpropitious. It is only because the mass of Englishmen are modest in their demands that it is possible to bring sport within reach of the democracy.



SELF-ORGANISATION

It is owing to natural instinct that English games have developed freely and spontaneously, without having to be nursed into adolescence ; they have appeared, as it were, out of the blue. This has been the case with all manifestations of the play-attitude and particularly with its more primitive aspects such as games. Fundamentally a "game" is nothing more than a jest, a pleasurable incident, some kind of entertainment, whether it be the hunting of animals or the more gentle art of love ; "sport" likewise means passing the time in light-hearted manner or friendly contest. It is generally realised that a man cannot be happy to order, and no artificial organisation is an all-fitting garment for true sport. So far as English sport is organised the game was always there before the organisation, and wherever the latter has come into operation, through players joining leagues or associations or placing themselves under controlling bodies, it has always remained independent of any kind of state control. Moreover, up to the present there is not the least financial combination. Consequently, we find no universal tribunal and no control bureau where information can be obtained on the subject of sport as a whole. It is useless to look for books on the organisation of English

sport, since there is no such thing as methodical organisation. Sport just exists and flourishes, that is all that can be said. Within the individual sports, however, some sort of organisation is traceable ; an automatic organisation arising rather like the natural separation of oil and water when they are mixed together. Like attracts like. In the schools the houses have their teams, at the 'varsities the colleges, in industry the factories, in the city the individual business-houses, in Whitehall the various government departments, in the army the regiments. They play against each other ; Eton against Harrow, Oxford and Cambridge, War Office and Home Office, London police against some other police, Selfridge's and Harrod's, England and Wales, Wales and Scotland.

In this manner there is a vast concatenation of unions, professional, territorial, national, even party, and each is embraced in the next higher union. The summit is always the national unit, which owes its existence to the goodwill of the subordinate constituents ; it has no kind of association with the state, but is controlled by experienced players in an honorary capacity.

Such is the method adopted by a people whose ideal is to confine state-control and bureaucracy within its narrowest limits ; incidentally they have been fortunate enough to make sport an integral part of the national life for generations past. Those who have much headway to make up may find other measures necessary, and not many nations are endowed with the Englishman's instinct for

self-help and self-organisation. But even in England, wherever there is headway to make up through commercialism seizing the reins before the masses could get into their stride, some active organisation is found necessary to make amends for negligence in the past. Yet the state keeps rigorously aloof, and the whole of the work, including finance, remains in the hands of sportsmen and voluntary patrons. Some assistance is, as I have said, rendered through councils throwing open their parks, but none but the organisation concerned would dream of calling the tune or of regulating or controlling the games in any way.

Apart from the provision of facilities the duty of the various organisations is confined to arranging matches and improving the quality of play. In this connection professionalism has a real value. Instruction in school games, especially in the public schools, has a very marked effect upon the standard of play. The organisation of pure athletics has been carried to a pitch which is exceptional even for England, resulting in a more thorough general training and bodily fitness. The Amateur Athletic Association governs the athletic world in much the same way as the Bank of England controls the City ; it dominates without ruling. It gives the tone and its authority is absolute, but it has no axe to grind and its object is the common good. While none of the innumerable athletic clubs is compelled to enter the Association, it is an unwritten law that no athletic contest must take place except

under the auspices of the A.A.A. Every self-respecting club belongs to it, regulating its training, handicaps, matches, in short its whole work, by the Association's hard and fast laws. This course pays in the long run, because one gets the benefit of the Association's unlimited experience. If a Boy Scouts' troop or the sports-club of a City firm wants to hold an internal racing or jumping competition it has immediate recourse to the A.A.A. Headquarters at once sends a representative from the nearest branch to attend the contest, which is thus conducted under the best possible technical conditions. For this service quite a nominal fee is paid and it is passed on to the A.A.A. Its representatives give their services free and with a devotion which is truly sportsmanlike. Of course their out-of-pocket expenses are paid. In the case of open events the participation of the A.A.A. is almost a necessity for fixing the handicaps.

The work of Headquarters is enormous during the season, for each week-end sees many thousand sporting events of every kind in the London area alone. One of the largest and most flourishing branches of the A.A.A. is the Civil Service A.A.A., the athletic union of Civil Servants inaugurated in 1864. One of its members is F. Gaby, the world-famous hurdler.



ARMY, CHURCH AND SPORT

THERE is no room for militarism in the organisation of English sport. Its object is not to exercise mind and body for the sake of military efficiency ; this fact, however, does not obviate a feeling of satisfaction, more or less disguised, in the minds of the nation's watch-dogs at the effectiveness of the play-attitude in this direction. Play is, in fact, a diluted form of instinctive human combativeness, and if, for this reason, its important and unique rôle is appreciated by the wise, it is largely because of the sublimation of the inborn fighting spirit into a peaceful atmosphere. Beware of arousing an Englishman. It takes more to do so than in the case of a German, to say nothing of a Roman, but when once an Englishman sees red, one can easily understand why English history has followed such a bloody course, and why, in English drama, there are more dead than living at the fall of the curtain. Hence this sublimation would be a very necessary measure had it not been found long ago. But this does not mean that militaristic ideas have been intentionally introduced into sport. On the contrary, the British army plays civilian games purely as games.

■ A nation's physical culture, taken as a whole, will necessarily increase its capacity for defence

in case of need, but the organisation of sport can never succeed under militaristic domination and at the same time be true to itself. Every form of national drill outside the army itself strikes a false note and this stumbling-block is only met with in the Officers' Training Corps and the Cadet Corps of the secondary schools, which are typical of the pre-war and war period. On the other hand the principle underlying the Boy Scouts movement is essentially non-militaristic. There is indeed, in public schools again, an unofficial compulsion as regards games, and this is a weak spot in English sport ; it has this justification, however, that it is the laziest boys who most require the discipline of games. With these exceptions few examples can be found of any artificial stimulation of play ; any kind of encouragement from above arises from special circumstances. It is precisely because English sport is so free from artificiality and external control, because state and army hold severely aloof, the the political consequences of true sport are so natural and so important. For it is in sport more than in anything else that English unity and nationality are realised. No foreigner knows quite what to make of the automatic strumming of the first few bars of the National Anthem after every performance at theatre, music-hall, cinema and concert, as a tribute to British patriotism. He sees the audience, at least the majority, stand stiff and respectful, but they are entirely impassive. Let the people play or only watch a game, however, and then, especially if they are winning, you see

what real patriotic pride means ; then they understand each other. England has her King's Birthday, her trooping of the colours, her own particular brand of heroic goose-step—she sometimes forgets these things when she laughs at the Germans—but she has a right to forget, for all this plays an infinitesimal part in comparison with the national pride with which millions and millions of the middle and working classes are imbued. The spirit of English sport, its essential democracy, its nationalism, freedom, primitiveness, are blended in one inseparable whole with the villages, churches, thatched cottages, parks, flower-gardens, nightingales, fireplaces, roast beef and nut-brown ale, pipe and fiddle, the gaiety, song and dance of popular romance. Here we have the real soul of the people, the true source of English nationalism, and the incentive to unity, in work, play and fair-play.

While state and army are content to leave sport alone without any misgiving because success is inversely proportional to their interference, the church does not remain so severely aloof. Nowadays, their influence with the upper classes and the intellectuals having dwindled, the churches are compelled to meet the masses half-way ; hence both the established and free churches are obliged to take cognisance of the awakened enthusiasm for play, however expressed, and especially of sport. But, setting aside any suspicion of opportunism, it is naturally the educational, ethical or, as we are nowadays inclined to call it, the cultural value of

sensible sport which has been responsible for the rapprochement. A short time ago a clergyman announced at a special "football service" in a poor quarter of Islington that if St. Paul were to come to London he would certainly not miss the Cup Final. He maintained that Christ was the greatest of sportsmen, but that he was the victim of unfair play on the field and was beaten by a "foul." Such a sermon is unusual even in England, but it shows which way the ecclesiastical wind is blowing. For the same ethical reasons the clergy are tolerant of the sportswomen also ; indeed they are to a great extent active sportsmen themselves, the Bishop of London not standing alone in this respect. Many parsons are skilled players of some kind of game, and the churches are willing organisers. Many hundreds of churches and chapels have not only founded social clubs for drama, music, and even dancing, but they have extended their activities to Boy Scout Troops, Church Lads' Brigades, and sports clubs. In the narrow yard of St. Martin's in the Fields, in the heart of London, near Trafalgar Square, there is to be seen a large net for cricket practice by youths of the congregation. Even on Sunday many an over is bowled in the very shadow of the churches, not a few of which make a decent income from letting their grounds for sports. Nor do the Roman Catholics form an exception. And far from such broad-mindedness being abnormal, the authority controlling the estates of the Church of England, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, have after some opposition conceded

Sunday play on some of their land leased for golf courses. Not, of course, during service, as the competition would be too dangerous. The original idea was to confine Sunday play to church-goers ; players had to undertake to attend church at least once on Sunday. On the whole the stipulation was honourably kept, and if a young scamp ever wished to break his pledge he could easily retort that a sporting vicar of a suburban church, where the rule was in force, was not so punctilious about his obligations—his reverence often has a “ bit on ” the game with his young parishioners and it is whispered that he does not always remember when he loses.



THE WEEK-END

IT was no small concession on the part of the English churches to take sport into partnership, for Sundays and holy days are natural play-days for the great mass of the population. So far no great sporting event takes place on Sunday, except boxing in Jewish Whitechapel but, as we have seen, the Sabbath is losing its sanctity. Only those who have experienced the English Sunday of a generation or two ago can appreciate the revolutionary nature of the change which has taken place in the last ten or twenty years. One sees a greater freedom in every direction, an emancipation from the old precepts, both good and bad, and the consequences will soon be visible. The Sabbath is going the same way as many other things. Customs, principles, the whole national character, seem to be thrown into the melting-pot, nor are we yet sure of the kind of metal which will result. Little stock is taken of Victorian morality, while bobbed hair and the charm of the short skirt further symbolise the revolt. All revolutions start from some prank or other and there is no exception here. The freedom in dress, speech and manners, often frivolous and when exaggerated repulsive, is but the symptom of a fundamental change ; as is likewise this revolutionary wave on the surface of which popular sport is

but a ripple. The puritanical cloak of self-satisfaction and bigotry has been torn away and this is itself an historical event. Among the numerous indications of lesser import the instinct for sport and play is one of the more significant. That the English Sunday has gone to pieces in the process will perhaps in the long run be a loss for English health and vigour. The wise Hindu devotes a great part of his life to meditation : Ghandi fasts and meditates before making any great decision. In England, far from meditating on Sunday, many neither think nor do anything else. The more the masses assert their right to a fair share of the pleasures of life, the less attention will inevitably be paid to the Sabbath. Those who work six days a week and, beyond their workroom, see nothing but gray walls and the tunnel of the Underground will not sit still on Sunday, nor walk three times to church. To-day, by train, bicycle, car, bus or charabanc, they speed on the wings of the wind through blossoming orchard and sun-kissed wood.

The English week-end, unfortunately just at a time when the foreigner is striving to imitate it, is in a state of disintegration. The "change" it offers the average man is of a somewhat questionable nature. The hundreds of thousands to whom it is a novelty are rather like young motorists ; for a couple of years they race across country like madmen in a cloud of petrol smoke ; after that there comes a desire for rest and with it the better aspects of the week-end.

It is a matter of some surprise to the English that the Germans have applied their talent for organisation to the week-end, for its origin and variations were quite haphazard. Where it has been artificially developed either by the enterprise of automobile companies or social organisations, it has lost its intrinsic character. The old-fashioned English week-end was at bottom a social necessity. People do not live in large towns unless they are obliged to do so. The landed gentry, for centuries England's rulers, lived on their estates and came up to Parliament at Westminster. Though many kept up a London house, their hearts were always in the country. Even to-day this is the idea underlying the week-end. Those who can afford it do not live amid the grime and noise of town ; they have one country place at least. Many of the *nouveaux riches* follow the example of the landed gentry, while those of smaller means live in garden suburbs. Thus the pendulum swings constantly between work and home, a tiring business and a waste of time, but worth while on the whole. But every one feels the need of stopping the pendulum for a few days at the week-end. A real old-fashioned English week-end is only possible for the fortunate few whose duties allow them to escape to their country houses from Friday evening to early Monday or even Tuesday morning. There they follow the traditions of their ancestors, preserved from boredom only by the play-attitude. A house-full of guests are invited ; this is the "week-end." Sunday is a mere episode. Wealthy

Members of Parliament, commercial magnates, captains of industry whose businesses run automatically, successful stockbrokers and others of the same class, are able to live in this way, while many writers and scholars retire to country solitude for three or four days. But for the rest there is no week-end of this kind. They have Saturday afternoon and Sunday free and perhaps have an outing on Sunday, but this can hardly be called a week-end. Sensible folk stay at home, play games, work in the garden, read, sleep or rest. But to be sensible is not the order of the day and so they crowd into trains like herrings in a barrel, their destination some seaside resort ; or motor through the petrol smoke of congested highways, without rest or relaxation. The young folk go tramping or carry their camp-kit on their bicycles. The lower classes take a charabanc which makes its first halt for drinks at ten o'clock in the morning. In short, the original week-end was conservative, and the new has become proletarian. With mass-migration and consequent confusion the week-end lost its original character of complete rest for body and mind. If the exaggeration of sport and this Sabbath-frenzy develop as hitherto, England will lose her greatest essential, nerve-rest.



WOMEN AND SPORT

THE female rôle in sport is not yet quite definite even in England where not a few women are as much at home on the football-field as in the less strenuous forms of athletics. The more sport increases in naïveté, the more it escapes from commercialism and enters harmoniously into the unity of physical and intellectual play, the less we have of records and fanaticism, the more easily will women find a niche suitable to their temperament. The female attitude in these matters will be regulated in the last resort by male opinion, even in a country where there are several million more women than men. The English male does not hanker after the Gretchen type, and still less after the Victorian young lady fresh fallen from heaven. The English woman is entirely emancipated, and the revulsion from puritanism is best exemplified in the metamorphosis of both girls and women. How recent the change is can be seen in the astonishing contrast between the older and younger generations. You can hardly believe that they are of the same species, or belong to the same race and people. Convention, prejudice and concealment have been cast to the winds in the most astonishing manner. For much of this the Suffragettes are responsible, in their own peculiar manner;

but of the numerous influences which are working for the transformation of English women, the strongest are those developed on the playing-field. The careless frivolity of society, the animal directness with which the lower classes make love among the bushes of Hampstead Heath or in other open spaces, the organised exuberance of plebeian *joie de vivre* on Derby Day or bank holidays, recall the time when puritanism was routed. The mingling of the sexes in sport has facilitated the process, not without adding a touch of discipline. Sport and games may provide pretexts and opportunities, but it cannot be said that in England they have led to sexual excitation. It appears rather that sport, and particularly the participation of woman in it, has simplified relations. A people that plays is able both to achieve and to maintain its natural simplicity.

In England woman participates in practically every kind of sport, and in many kinds, though not in public events, the sexes compete with each other. Golf is perhaps the game in which women come nearest to equality with the other sex, setting aside minor sports like archery. In riding and jumping contests women are redoubtable competitors. Cricket and hockey are the principal games played at girls' schools. Rowing, swimming, fencing and athletics are indulged in to the full ; lacrosse, and of course tennis, are popular. With women as with men, the school, and in a lesser degree the university, sets the tone. With due regard to the exigencies of sex the girls' school upholds the same

principle as the boys' by recognising the child's desire and right to play, and by fostering and guiding its inclinations in this direction.

Apart from athletics girls play team-games, but football is excluded from school sports as a matter of good taste. The curriculum often embraces rhythmic gymnastics and private schools provide for very wide individual instruction. This aims primarily at character formation and the development of natural aptitudes. The young English-woman of to-day is freedom personified. She sweeps through life with unconstrained assurance. She goes out unescorted, even to public dances, and dispenses with male protection at the theatre or even race-meetings. As a rule she does not abuse her freedom, for it is her natural attribute and man respects it. Nowhere in the world can women pursue their lives so unfettered and with less danger of molestation, than in England, although the English are by no means ascetics. Since the war tendencies the reverse of platonic are noticeable among the youth of the lower classes—the upper show greater discretion ; but in so far as there is mutuality the principle does not suffer.

Not the least important consequence of the athletic pursuits of the present generation is the wearing of very attractive clothing. The uniform of the English school girl is not as a rule conspicuous for its beauty, but for games she often wears the same multi-coloured blazers as the boys. Adult women possess the English knack of dressing with

WORKING MEN'S
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WOMAN IN SPORT

the simple elegance appropriate to the playing-field. Most English women see the light and amusing side of sport and regard it as a pleasure rather than a task imposed by heavy-handed fate. Of course there are, as everywhere else, female monstrosities standing midway between the sexes. From the ranks of such are recruited the female "flannelled fools" capable of any extravagance. This type of female lunatic favours cycling, especially tandem and in bloomers ; and general athletics can provide examples of unbecoming freakishness. A conscientious statistician could doubtless give us some astonishing information about women's records in sport. But why trouble him ? Even for men records are a questionable aim when viewed from the broad standpoint of culture. But as regards women, such statistics would give an entirely erroneous view of sport. Fortunately we have left behind us the simpering gracefulness so long associated with English tennis and archery ; gone are the long trains and feathered hats. The woman of to-day fits into the period. It is significant that the tiny lap-dog has given place to the well-bred Alsatian. But few women carry sport to excess even in England.

Although it seems a commonplace nowadays to say that the English woman is a games-player, this does not apply to the masses, the twenty millions of Englishwomen. There is no sport for the millions of working-class women, and the hundreds of thousands of female employees and shop assistants have hitherto had very little. A few thousand

may play tennis of an evening, but the masses have to be content with cinemas and the Palais de Danse for their chief means of recreation. They go for walks with their friends, talk and laugh, hide under the bushes where possible, or accompany the youths to the playing-fields and watch them play. Thousands tear across the country riding pillion on motor-bicycles. But this cannot be called sport for the women of the masses. Yet we must remember that sport for women is still in its infancy in England and the schoolgirls of to-day are growing up different from their mothers and grandmothers. It is only of recent years that sport has begun to be democratised for the male. So that we may see great things yet, and not every one in England looks forward with pleasure to the approaching high-water mark of female athletics. Only let them have their heads . . . ! In any case circumspection is advisable. If such a well-known sportsman as the Cambridge athlete Abrahams feels some anxiety because women do not flinch from the most strenuous contests, it is not because he fears their competition. So long as strength and endurance are in question the championships must always fall to men. But it is because he knows from personal experience what the strain of record-sprinting and similar events is. Surely it is bad enough for men to ruin their constitutions. The tortured faces of male runners should be sufficient warning and, apart from record-breaking, there is the danger that women, when once they begin to take sport seriously, may become greater fanatics

than the men. Finally, many ask, what will be the effect on the race ? As yet it is too early to say ; at present we are pleased with the effect which games have on women, the freedom and strength of limb, the short skirt and silk stockings. But as to the next generation we are in the dark ; we do not know what kind of children will be born of the women who have trained and raced on the track as strenuously as the fathers. Sport is a great leveller of the sexes. The Eton crop, borrowed from the Eton boys, the imitation of male attire—pictures have appeared in the newspapers of a cricket-match played by girls in pyjamas—are matters of taste. The majority of young men view with pleasant surprise the growing possibilities of the female body in the twentieth century. An awakening was wanted, but there are already indications of a reaction. Nor does it come from the clergy ! But these are only externals. Short skirts or long, the bodily and intellectual influences of masculinity and sport are at work and we know not where they will lead. Emancipation has created a vacuum, a vacuum which needs filling. Eighty years ago millions of men, women and children in England used to ask incessantly, “ What are we going to do to-day ? ” But their needs were not exorbitant. In these post-war days the soul’s emptiness cries out like the belly of a hungry man. Twenty years ago, when the garden-suburb was young, a house and garden sufficed. To-day a car appears as a sign that the man wants to escape as early as possible from the house which was once

his chief ambition. At first it was the man who escaped from the boredom of home, now the whole household escapes—from itself. At least we must confess that the playing-field is no unworthy refuge. Many English housewives have long ago exchanged the cooking-spoon for the tennis racquet. It is said that while the Englishwoman's status is, at least superficially, exceptional, the man is in an unobtrusive way still the master. That is as it should be, but the Englishman does not seem to notice how many household comforts he has quietly learnt to dispense with. What is a hot dinner after all? Let's have another game.

But a time comes when the home has to be re-discovered, for this enthusiasm only endures with youth.



THE SPORTS AND THEIR PUBLIC

THE MYSTERIES OF CRICKET

IF an Englishman is asked what is the most typical national game he will not say football, but cricket. This does not mean that cricket is the most popular game and that a cricket match draws most spectators, but the game is pre-eminently English. On no other soil and in no other country can it truly flourish. And in this case English does not mean British. The Irish are British citizens, but they are by no means English ; certainly, they are not cricket enthusiasts. In England the game has existed and will exist for centuries. Cricket is a phase of English mentality, a key to the Englishman's soul, a product of English temperament. No pundit has thought it out, no one has organised it ; it has grown up in the most natural and popular manner, like a folk-dance or a folk-song ; an amusement for villagers who collected on the green of an evening for games and dancing. No manager, no professionals, no High Schools of Sport (even to-day you would search for these in vain in England) and no instructor. People wanted simply to play and be happy. To-day at Lord's cricket ground in St. John's Wood or at the Oval, south of the Thames, with their stands and enclosures for eighty thousand people, it is difficult to remember

that this is the good old village cricket ; they seem to have been a different race who were once content with a village green, a fiddle and good humour. But if we leave the capital, where every step costs money, for the city's environs, and get out into the meadows and hills, figures clad in snowy white appear here and there among the tree-clumps and bushes ; they are strangely grouped, now stooping tensely, now in sudden movement. Near them stand a little crowd of old and young people in the evening sunlight, watching the game. It all fits into the simple loveliness of the landscape. The control and restfulness of the picture faithfully represent the character of the participants. A peaceful andante pervades both mind and nature.

If those who know nothing of cricket want to feel its charm, this is the side from which to approach it. At Lord's we shall always find it an insoluble mystery. On the great occasion of the Eton and Harrow match the cricket-ground becomes a tea-garden, crowded with mothers, aunts and sisters, in their best summer finery, so as not to let down their young men-folk who insist on an exquisite setting. It is a series of delightful picnics with an accompaniment of cakes and ices, tents and flags in all their gaiety. Incidentally a game is in progress for those who excel at it. But on other days Lord's, the Oval, and other cricket-grounds are scenes of deadly earnest. Play then comes under the sway of professionals, great heroes of cricket like Jack Hobbs. The village idyll yields place to a contest of gladiators. And now gate-money becomes an

important matter, not only for managers, but for the players, who are well paid.

As a matter of fact there is no longer any strict line of demarcation between professionals and amateurs. Apart from tennis where the distinction is rigorously observed, professionals and amateurs play in the same team in all the better known forms of sport. But when cricket was transplanted from the village to the modern public ground and began to be played as a skilled game, its character became entirely changed and one is tempted to believe that its popularity may be due to the new atmosphere of scores and virtuosity. But fundamentally this is not so. The true cricket-field is not Lord's but the meadows around the town. At Lord's or the county ground you see the finest technique, but for the spirit of the game you must go into the suburbs.

No sport can exist or develop without strenuous effort and serious practice but, as in other walks of life, it is not records and abnormalities which count ; the social value of things lies in their catholicity, their general utility, their suitability to popular needs.

Such is the natural consequence of the penetration of the democratic spirit into play and everyday life. Many see their ideals shattered but, the more we look around us, the more we observe the tendency to replace professionalism and exclusiveness in sport, games and numerous other activities by something entirely new, something in accord with the spirit of the people. Fundamentally there is

nothing novel in this ; it is merely a return to earlier traditions, but with this difference, that the population has multiplied many times in the interim ; and the increase in population, combined with our marvellous technical developments, have made the task infinitely more difficult. This consideration is of the utmost importance in dealing with all forms of sport and play, and constantly crops up in the course of our review. We are at the cross-roads.

Sport means contest. Under the guise of the play-attitude we find that elementary instinct impelling us towards action, fame, wealth and the satisfaction of an insatiable ambition—but all in peaceful manner. The alternative is war, in its broadest sense. Even if enthusiasm for record-breaking and conquest could be dispensed with as an incentive and example, nevertheless this primary instinct would of itself lead to exaggeration and fanaticism. So long as it is possible to add half an inch to a record, competition will continue. But this craze is only one aspect of the play-attitude and by no means an essential one. So long as England was pre-eminent in sport or even its exclusive home, the chief records were held by Englishmen and, as one country after another came into the arena, the craze for results was artificially stimulated—national honour was at stake.

Sport has fallen a victim to the modern press, and especially modern business enterprise, which sells its services to the masses at a handsome profit ; both have helped to stimulate this ridiculous fever for record-making and record-breaking. And the

offenders are not so much the players as the spectators and those who make their living out of sport. English sportsmen are reasonable enough as a rule. Despite their muscular development, they run, jump, box and play games for the pleasure of the thing, even when it is their profession.

Cricket, the most typical of all English games, affords concrete proof that the mere game is of far greater importance than the scores and results which tend to obscure its real significance. And the more the amateur spirit sets its face against the commercialisation of sport and play, the more distinctly will play emerge as a feature of a harmonious culture.

The important thing in cricket is that everybody can play it, even those whose aptitude for other sports is questionable. The real cricketer is a genius, but every one can enjoy the admirable atmosphere surrounding the game and appreciate the picture of white figures on the village greens. And not necessarily as a spectator, for no one is too young, nor yet too old. When in the evening children pitch the stumps on lawn or green, sisters, fathers and grandfathers are both willing and successful fielders ; they may even prove useful as batsmen or wicket-keepers. The father takes off his coat and straightway enters into the spirit of the game ; he is twenty years younger, happy and rejuvenated. Detractors complain that cricket is too slow, but this is really one of its attractions ; for no one needs to be an athlete to play every-day cricket. And the equipment is simple. Six stumps, two

bats, a ball, and a few pads suffice for the amusement of twenty-two players. But you can get along with one set of stumps and one bat—often enough in the London streets a lamp-post and a stick have to suffice. The wicket is a small mark ; two little bails lie on three parallel stumps and the object of this game, almost unknown on the Continent, is to hit the wicket with a leather ball. The other side provides a defender whose duty it is to keep off the ball with a large wooden bat. If he can hit it flying through the air he tries to make a run by crossing to the other wicket and perhaps back again before the fielders can throw the ball in. Good play requires both a very quick eye and great presence of mind. The difficulty of defence is enhanced not only by extremely fast bowling but also by the spin put on the ball by the bowler. He makes it drop just in front of the batsman and jump up again at an unexpected angle. Apart from the finesse which great cricketers have put into the game, it is a very enjoyable pastime to the English temperament. Team work and its discipline are very much in evidence. Moreover great unselfishness is required, for only two of a side can bat at once ; the rest must wait for their innings. The other side has a very dull time in the field, yet the keenest attention is expected of them—this is where family cricket loses its charm, for fielding is at times too boring for youngsters.

The great matches at the county grounds or at Lord's often draw enormous crowds. County or international matches occupy no less than three

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SPORT AND SOCIETY - LORD'S CRICKET GROUND

whole days and it is astonishing how many men on such days have nothing to do. One envisages the deaths of countless aunts and grandmothers ; how otherwise could these enthusiasts get a day off ? Three whole days of cricket—one batsman after another tries to keep in as long and make as many runs as possible. They follow one another in constant procession. You notice no appreciable change in the picture. Any one who is neither an Englishman nor a cricketer finds this slow-motion film very tedious after half-an-hour. The atmosphere of the village green is replaced by an audience of technical experts. The finest nuances are of importance. Unless your eyes are perfect, you are entirely out of it. It is only from the joyful commentary of bright-eyed experts that the layman can gather what has happened. Some exquisite twist of the ball, some artistic stroke by the batsman, a lightning pick-up by a fielder, something occurs and arouses general approval before we suspect that anything has happened. Just now we were breathing in deep draughts the air of the village green ; now we are in a vacuum. But to the mass of cricketers it is the finest ozone. Three days !

Popular as cricket is, the cricket crowd does not hail from the lowest but mainly from the middle and upper classes. This is largely because English cricket finds its greatest backing in the schools of every kind without distinction of sex. The cricket public is a disciplined public, educated, very quiet, attentive, keenly observant, weighty in comment.

Many women are present, for the English girl has served her apprenticeship to the game. It is extraordinary what a people's game this is, so long as the people play it, and how expert and artificial it is on the county ground.

It is in this sense that cricket is pre-eminently English and yet by no means a game of the masses. To this extent the proletariat is not yet entirely English. The middle classes on the other hand are often more English than the English themselves, but on reaching a certain point in prosperity or age they turn from cricket to the more aristocratic pleasures of the golf-course. Meanwhile, the masses play football.



THE FOOTBALL CROWD

EVERY healthy English youth is a footballer, actual or potential. Over a million belong to football clubs. The number of spectators at the great matches which occupy the whole of the winter season runs into many millions. Every Saturday afternoon sees over a million people gathered together as spectators at the various grounds. No other form of sport has penetrated in like degree and in so short a time to the lowest strata of society. Despite the thousands of players, English football has become problematic on account of its host of spectators. Successful as internal organisation and healthy popular instinct have been, commercial organisation and capitalistic exploitation of sport as a recreation for the masses have been more successful still. Thus it comes about that modern football has recently developed in a manner peculiar to itself. No Englishman can deny this since his eyes have been opened through the activities of the National Playing Fields Association. Even more than was the case with cricket the dominating influence tended to fall into the hands of the paid professional clubs. It was to them that the masses of the town population looked for entertainment and excitement during the gloomy winter months.

It is of some significance that the most valuable trophy, the famous Football Association Cup, can only be competed for by the professional teams belonging to the various affiliated leagues. The exigencies of training and of physical effort are so excessive that these teams contain only players who are prepared to sacrifice the best years of their life to the game. While first-class cricket can be played into the middle forties, a football player is seldom a success after he has turned thirty. It is a short-lived calling but, for players who can command terms, a very lucrative one. The enormous receipts of the football clubs permit of a much higher rate of pay than is possible in cricket. The wealthier First Division clubs of the Association pay their first eleven a salary of about eight pounds a week during the season, and in addition a pound extra per game in the first team and a further two pounds for a win. The second eleven receive a fixed salary of six pounds a week. In the Second and Third Divisions the pay is proportionately less and varies with the receipts, that is, with the success of the club. The better a club plays and the more famous it is, the higher the takings. On an average the pay in the Second and Third Divisions amounts to about five to seven pounds a week, all in. During the summer when there is no play the fixed salaries drop to half. At the end of every fifth season such clubs usually grant a special bonus of from five to six hundred pounds. If a very good player is enticed away from another club he receives a very handsome

sum for the transfer. Valuable directorships in certain firms are also included in the benefits which many clubs can bestow on their members, thanks to the favour of friends. When the playing years have passed there are endless possibilities, of which the purchase or management of a public house is not the least attractive. The professionals usually hail from the lower ranks and their prestige with the clientèle of the "pubs" ensures a satisfactory consumption of beer and whisky.

The lien between the football crowd, the public of the great matches, and the public house is as close as that between first-class football and its spectators. The great mass of the latter is thoroughly proletarian, a public which is very interested, very knowledgeable, very enthusiastic. No small part of the football crowd, arriving at the ground by rail or charabanc from great distances, shows unmistakable signs of alcoholic excitement, and if there has been any failing in this respect, the lost ground is soon recovered. On this account alone it is often no joke to be jammed in the mass. Even in London the crowd at a great football match is very mixed, but it must not be taken as representative of the whole people. The upper classes, who take a keen interest in school and university games, usually avoid commercial sport. The educated middle-classes are much more sparingly represented than at cricket matches ; on the other hand, town-folk of the lower classes, shopkeepers, employees and especially artisans—in short the people who wear caps in town—all these and the lowest of

the proletariat who are looking for amusement are strongly represented. The female attendance is small, but youngsters are numerous. There are many thousands who live on the dole and find their only consolation in football matches on Saturday, a glass or two of beer, a dram of gin and in the last resort the Cinema. People of this class are not as a rule seen at cricket matches. Football is more comprehensible to them. While at Lord's the cricket crowd follows the game with the intensity of experts, the spectators of the cup ties are a surging undisciplined mass who are easily satisfied. The two crowds are entirely different and, in so far as they belong to the same stratum, they behave quite differently at a cricket match and on the football ground. The football crowd is less cultivated, but it is more natural. With them the nature and manners of the masses come more directly to the surface. They show that the English are not all refined. The masses are still un-English enough to shout vulgarly, to be happily, drunkenly, enthusiastic without definite cause. The strange flights of the ball, kicked by fantastically acrobatic limbs, butted by the heads or fists of the goalkeepers, lightning rushes, swift turns, devoted defence and the combination of the teams in which all thought of self is lost, all this is welcome food for gaiety, enthusiasm, mental tension, followed by a sudden escape from nightmare when the goal is freed from danger. There is no doubt that sport of this kind, assisted by gallons of alcohol, sets free the emotions, and creates wonderful crescendos of excitement,

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THE MASSES AS SPECTATORS

giving rise to dramatic tension otherwise unobtainable in actual experience. These masses of spectators seem to find too little dramatic excitement in the stormy scenes of home life or daily occupation; that part of their experience is too subjective, too much shadowed by their own personality. The drama of sport on the other hand obviously enriches their temperament and powers of sensation. They shout, jostle, play the fool, wear grotesque headgear and huge paper flowers representing the colours of their favourite players or those on whom they have put their money. Many disguise themselves entirely. Excitable in the last degree, they are ready on the slightest provocation to burst into laughter. They are obviously hysterical, and swing noisy rattles to give expression to just a little of what they feel under the magic spell of football.

Thus the *circenses*, apart from their brilliant technique, have after all a deep psychological justification whatever the occasion may be; the capacity for experience is no small thing. Mental and emotional receptivity are gradually increased. To-day every one is aware of the finer qualities which true sport can engender. The psychology of the football crowd affords proof that they can be communicated, and consequently hope for the educative effect of sport is no empty dream. At least we may say that while they are watching the match this noisy crowd pay their tribute to fair play. They stand patient and good-humoured in a terribly cramped position, and thousands follow

the game conscientiously and with the impartiality of a judge. The discipline of the players themselves is usually faultless, which is only natural since the penalties of any breach are severe. But the mass of spectators also exercise self-control to the best of their ability. On the whole they are not unsuccessful, but excitability varies with different parts of the country. The Welsh colliers and dockers are the most excitable people in Great Britain, and local patriotism runs high ; hence a football crowd in Cardiff is a most interesting mass-phenomenon. The strange effects of mass-psychology observable in any crowd are much more in evidence here than in a similar gathering in London. Racial distinctions now come to a head. Racial, "national," and political partisanship, and rivalries, between various parts of Great Britain are by no means negligible ; their disruptive tendencies are unknown to us, partly because of the country being an island with the designation of Great Britain ; partly because the English who rule it are not anxious to bring these matters into prominence before foreigners. But it would be an interesting experiment to see a cup final played at Cardiff, specially if Cardiff lost to a London team, and, according to Welsh opinion, unfairly. The Stadium at Wembley at least affords a neutral atmosphere for such events, and it is the opinion of those best acquainted with mass-psychology that, owing to the excitability of football crowds and its consequences, international matches should not be held in such storm-centres as we have been

considering. It is an open question whether international contests of such a kind make for mutual peace and understanding, for in the end it is a question not of intelligence but of emotion. Such a problem could only arise through the present-day popularity of football. The cultured Englishman can carry off a national defeat without any obvious resentment. Moreover, he has become accustomed to share his honours in this direction with other nations.

The typical football crowd is only to be seen in connection with "soccer" or association football. The rugby game draws quite a different class of people, more select and self-controlled. Rugger is more complicated and requires keener observation. With the masses it enjoys nothing like the popularity of association football. Moreover rugby, even as an international game, is predominantly, though by no means entirely, an amateur game. Far more than soccer, rugger demands of the player a strict discipline ; he must restrain his temperament within prescribed bounds. The conception of fair play is here put to its severest test, for it is a question of carrying on an apparently savage and reckless fight for the ball with the strictest self-control. This game, often decried for its roughness, seems to entail numerous risks of broken bones and noses, but the courageous player who doesn't mind a fall or two does not find English rugby any rougher or more dangerous than many other games. It provides excellent training and discipline in many respects, skill and unselfishness in

combination, presence of mind, nimbleness, endurance, reckless courage and, above all, fair play—regard for one's opponent. It is no wonder that the game is favoured more by the public schools than is association football. As a matter of fact, its inventor was a boy at the famous Rugby school ; ordinary football seemed to him too conventional and slow, and he conceived the bright idea of picking up the ball and running away with it. In such and similar ways the leading public schools invented all sorts of special games, like the wall game at Eton ; their great advantage is to give an air of distinction to certain spectators who are able to show by their knowledge of the rules that they were at Eton, Harrow or Charterhouse, as the case may be. But rugby has become a general asset. Its chief exponents are schools, universities, and the army, while soccer belongs to the nation and the masses. Wherever a handful of Britons are stranded, after a short time you will see a football flying. Without suspecting it, by playing British games we are disseminating British propaganda. It is too late to change—and it would be a pity to do so.



GOLF AND TENNIS

GOLF, hailing originally from Scotland, is not one of England's "popular" sports ; it is necessarily confined to the upper classes. The gap between those who cannot afford it, and the rest who play or could play if they would, is bridged by the aspirations of the average man to buy some clubs and join an expensive club as soon as he can afford to do so. But, especially in the north, where interest is keenest, this does not preclude hundreds and even thousands of spectators from flocking to see a match between famous players ; nor can it be denied that the number of players and courses has very greatly increased in southern England. In Scotland on the contrary golf is still to-day a really national sport. Even the workman and the lower-class employee used to play their round of golf in the evening. Possibly a workman and his employer played a round together, for most Scottish golf courses are public. There was plenty of ground to be had, endless stretches of turf, sand and heather. Every one could come and play for a few pence, even on the wonderful public course above Edinburgh, which belongs to the municipality. To-day things have altered slightly, but in Scotland the poor man is still a

74 THE SPORTS AND THEIR PUBLIC

keen golfer, and the numerous public courses are at his disposal at a nominal fee.

In England conditions are different. Although a public course on the Scottish model was opened a short time ago at Richmond, the many hundreds of golf clubs prefer their privacy, and moreover all the conditions militate against golf becoming a popular game. It requires both time and money. Time in particular, for these beautiful courses are scattered about the country, and the best are at a great distance from London, and these exquisite rural Utopias cannot easily be reached except by car. However, to play regularly you want not only the necessary kit but usually some social standing, at all events to get into the more exclusive clubs. The poor man keeps away from them, or frequents the putting-greens in the public parks and the suburbs, miniature courses on which only the last strokes of the hole are played, the final putts. This is interesting enough, but it lacks the romance of the big courses with their hills and declivities, streams and pools, hedges and sand bunkers. You miss the fresh breeze to carry the ball out of the straight and the thousand charms associated with a full drive and its fatal hazards ; above all, the long walk from the first hole to the eighteenth, to say nothing of the short one to the nineteenth. A course without hazards is as dull as one without natural beauty. Herein Great Britain stands pre-eminent. The country is ideal for golf, the turf is unequalled, conditions of ownership are exceptional, and in this case rain

is no disadvantage ; on the contrary, it tends to enliven the picture by bringing out the multi-coloured umbrellas which creep like giant mushrooms across the landscape. Moreover, the game consorts well with the English character, for it is the height of bad form to talk about anything but the game. Lloyd George is a well-known exception, but he is a Welshman. On the other hand the Scot complies entirely with English traditions in this respect. There are, however, others whose vows of silence are not as strictly observed. The reason why foreign temperaments have recently met with such difficulties in certain golf clubs has not a little to do with this ban on talkativeness and "shop." English silence in many cases, and especially among the upper classes where it is most remarkable, may denote a certain vacuity and laziness, but more often defers to the principle that eternal chatter leads nowhere. This principle has at least its advantages in sport, and especially if golf be regarded as a recreation or a not too rigorous walk in peaceful surroundings and comfortable clothes.

In the absence of big commercial possibilities, professionalism does not count for much in this game. Cricket can be transplanted from its home in the English countryside, but a golf match cannot be fitted into an arena. As a matter of fact, professionals are little more than club instructors. There is plenty of scope for instruction, and the opportunities for skill tend more and more to attract the younger generation to a game which

used to be regarded as suitable only for second childhood. While its sporting aspect tends nowadays to be more strongly emphasised, for the majority its function is actually little more than to lend colour to a walk after a ball. And this is the typically English part of the game, the combination of nature with sport and rest with motion. To look at him you would think the golfer was doing nothing in particular, or that perhaps every ten minutes or so he was giving a casual and light-hearted smack at a ball ; in the same manner, it might be imagined that a cricket team was idling pleasantly among trees and hillocks or that the English rider was sitting half-asleep on his hunter. But this is the reverse of true ; behind this apparent calm lies the most powerful concentration and perfect technical skill—or at least the aspiration. Like every other sport, golf has its disappointments, for no one likes to hack up great divots of precious turf and religiously replace them before the eyes of onlookers ; nevertheless it is one of the most beneficial forms of sport. “ Damns ” are fairly rare, but by no means extinct, on the course.

Tennis on the other hand is pure sport. It requires a particularly mild nature to play this game without ambition. It has long ceased to be played as an exercise in grace and deportment as one sees it depicted in Victorian illustrations. Mankind soon changes, and dandyism is dead. No one of the younger generation desires either to appear Victorian or to play as the game was then played. The tennis champion, man or woman, is agile

and, in a magnificent way, stylish, but absolute concentration entirely obscures self-consciousness. He plays intuitively and for this reason any one who thinks of himself, his faults, his partner's, or even the umpire's shortcomings, must inevitably go to pieces. It takes a long time for even the greatest players to drop into this negative twilight in which only the flight of the ball and the opening across the net are visible. Borotra loses whole sets before he gets into this condition. Such play is largely a matter of character ; it taxes both nerves and strength. Those who regard tennis merely as a pleasant exercise become in course of time nuisances to themselves and others, if only on account of their imperturbable amiability.

It is here that English character often seems to come to a player's assistance. There are hundreds of tennis players who without the slightest self-deception play badly and enjoy it. Without this happy optimism the rapid spread of the game since the war could not have been possible. Nor, apart from this modesty of performance, have demands been too exacting in respect of the quality of the grounds, a matter dealt with elsewhere. Consequently, there is plenty of extraordinarily bad play to be seen, combined with wretched grounds, and dress which falls considerably short of English standards. Democracy has brought a vulgar note into tennis which it formerly did not possess. But the very vulgarity has a value ; these people on their rough grounds enjoy the game and all it entails, deck-chairs, happy girls, and in

fine the many extraordinary things of which racquet and ball are capable. It is not the atmosphere for champions nor for those who take their game seriously. It will take a few years to see what results popular tennis will achieve. Perhaps there is unsuspected metal in these lower strata.

Between the champions and the happy masses referred to above stand all those whose sporting instinct is not satisfied with bad play and who suffer from the usual complaint of overrating their real form. This stratum is the most important in England as elsewhere. On an average they play a very good game, better than on the Continent. But they suffer in the same way : they rejoice over their good moments and are unconsolable about the shortness of their duration. Consequently, no word is heard more often on English courts than "sorry," the player's usual expression of disgust at his own performance. At times the gaiety of English character seems to go to pieces sadly at tennis and the play-attitude temporarily loses its natural charm. Moreover, English nerves are not made of iron, and good play is overshadowed in many clubs by personal likes and dislikes. But on the whole the sporting player, the member of the better suburban clubs, plays his game creditably and with self-control. By virtue of its exciting rallies and its varied incidents tennis is an excellent test of the educative value of sport. Endless club matches and numerous open tournaments have a steadying effect on character. Even on the bumpy third-rate courts where tennis is an amusement

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THE BISHOP OF LONDON

rather than a game, players learn that there must be no quarrelling with partners or opponents. A player who allows himself to be ruffled by a false decision from an umpire at Wimbledon will not go far.

If at the present day even the best English players lag far behind the American and French champions, the main reason is the narrowness of the social stratum from which the players are still drawn. Proficiency in modern tennis makes such severe demands that very few can combine all the necessary requirements. But even within the class which England has so far depended upon to produce a champion, the selection is extremely limited by the fact that the schools, especially the public schools, generally discourage tennis. Their preference is for team games, because they regard combination as of the highest social value. Besides, too many courts would be required. But as a rule the best tennis is only possible during a limited number of years and as a result of a very early training ; the development of the necessary temperament on which all depends requires a prospective player to be as it were a blank page. Many years are required to turn out a first-rate international.

Owing to the attitude adopted by the principal schools towards tennis it is quite comprehensible that the majority of English youths on leaving school remain faithful to their school games to the neglect of tennis. It is impossible to play several games concurrently, especially when one does not

get home from business in the evening before seven o'clock. But even the luckier ones who go to the Varsity are more naturally attracted to their old school sports, soccer, rugger, hockey, rowing and athletics, than to tennis. The latter has only of late years been taken seriously at the Varsities and is still generally deemed unworthy of a full blue. Trophies in other sports stand higher in public estimation. In fact, it may be said that tennis in Germany, especially as regards the upper classes, plays a far more important rôle than in England. This is only to be expected as the well-to-do Englishman has a dozen excellent sports to select from, of which the present-day German can only indulge in two or three. Society has its polo-season, its regattas, Ascot week, its hunting, its shooting and fishing in Scotland, one luxurious pastime after another. For such people tennis has no particular charm or importance. And for young folk the extravagant social life of to-day has its effect on sport, an effect which is enhanced by the fact that even first-rate tennis in England is too much tied up with social considerations. We may yet see the son of a coach, or a quondam ball-boy, win the world's championship for England.



ATHLETICS

COMPARED with the numbers who flock to cricket and football matches, the twenty-five thousand spectators of the greatest English athletic event is modest enough. This is the Amateur Athletic Association sports meeting at the famous Stamford Bridge ground. But the attendance comprises the keenest and most expert spectators in the world. There are many young people amongst them, and the lower business classes predominate. Athletics naturally make a special appeal to the young and the very young. In England they appeal to people without distinction of class, social rank, or politics. If the spectators at Stamford Bridge seem to comprise proportionately more of the lower than the upper classes, it is because the principal meeting of the A.A.A. falls in the middle of the sports-season, during which it is impossible, especially for young students, to keep abreast of events. The student is an old boy and his presence is required at his school match ; if he belongs to a university the college game attracts him ; at the same time he may belong to a sports-club, requiring his services here and there ; then he is associated with some county, and in the last resort he is a Briton, all of which adds to his duties in the sports world. On the other hand the man in the street

has an easier programme, and consequently "Stamford Bridge" means more to the lower classes. For him the words stand for one thing and one thing only—A.A.A. championships; the student's interest is confined rather to the fact that Oxford and Cambridge also compete against one another on this ground; the schoolboy thinks its main importance lies in the fact that the school sports take place there. Thus for all of them athletics are grouped around certain points; the schools, universities, associations, counties, firms, factories, banks, even parishes, all have their sports and contests; nevertheless they are all cognisant of a unity and act accordingly.

In athletics the A.A.A., whose activities are referred to elsewhere, represents a complete sporting community. Thus it is quite usual to see young men of all classes, lords, clerks, workmen, and students running shoulder to shoulder in the open events and championships. Their association is the less constrained in that each belongs to his own particular sports-group, just as stable international life can only develop out of conscious nationality.

It is for reasons such as these that an essentially individual sport like athletics has become such a unifying force in England. It is a matter of English instinct.

When Lord Burleigh runs in a hurdle-race and wins, and when some one else wins the high or the long jump, it is not regarded so much as an individual effort dependent on the agility, training and ambition of a single person; the English

think more of the club, university, county or nation to which the man belongs, than of the man himself. A man races and wins not for himself entirely, but for other people, his club, association, or whatever it may be. Team contests and events requiring combination are very popular for the same reason. Relay races belong to this category which comprises several other kinds of sport.

On the other hand, mechanical group-demonstrations are quite foreign to the English nature ; the Englishman does not care for the performance of identical movements by a large body of people at the word of command, a spectacle which is common enough in other countries. Physical exercises of this kind find their place in the school curriculum, but the part they play in English life is small, and they are alien to the English temperament. For similar reasons gymnasia are not of much account.

The essential equipment for sport is a ball and possibly a bat. But why have any equipment at all ? We have limbs and the land. So let's across country ! Cross-country running is the most popular and certainly the most typically athletic training in England. Paper-chasing and cross-country running are characteristic of the English temperament. Over hedges, fences, through bogs, up to the armpits in streams, up and down hill, through rain or wind. This solution of the problem is not quite the same as the drill-sergeant's with his gymnasium, discipline, and his mass formations. Each has his particular method.

Half-naked youths in training course through London streets and garden suburbs, either at the double, or walking with the peculiar gait which appears so stiff and is yet so elastic. You often pass them when motoring as they walk along the main road from London to Brighton. The competitors consist of athletes, shop assistants, students or workmen. When they get old and their springiness has gone, they will stretch their legs just as stiffly. It may be from the Treasury Bench, or perhaps on the table—of the House of Commons.



THE RIVER

WHEREVER there is water you find happy English folk. In the dirty puddles on Hampstead Heath urchins stand knee-deep in mud and put their questionable catches into glass bottles. There is a river in Inverness where older gentlemen in waders walk up to their chests in the water. In the Highlands you see lonely cars standing from morn till evening at the roadside, waiting while the owner fishes stream or lake. At Highgate there are a couple of pools with a high scaffolding ; here we find our diving experts. In Hyde Park enthusiasts break the ice for their morning dip. Finally, no part of England is far from the seaside which offers a constant invitation to play. After five minutes everybody does so if only with stones. You practise shots at the rocks. There was a time when the sea had a different effect on the human being—it made him reserved, superstitious, and devout. To-day the old shore-dwellers are nonentities, it's the visitors who bring grist to the mill. There is no doubt about their having to pay, and there are thousands willing to do so. They come to play, to enjoy themselves, to get rid of the blues. The English summer visitor in his finery is fundamentally not so far removed from

the urchin up to his knees in mud fishing for sticklebacks.

The seaside is England's principal playground. There you find, divided amongst the various resorts, people of every class, either playing or looking on. Southend belongs to East London, Blackpool to the Lancashire operatives, Brighton to pensioners and the upper middle class, Torquay to people who want to imagine themselves at the Riviera. The rich have magnificent seaside places in Devon, Cornwall and Sussex. England has a few big rivers, as every schoolboy knows, but the Englishman knows how to turn the smallest brook to advantage. The smaller streams have little current as the fall is not great ; they wind gently round the undulations of the landscape. They are either naturally or artificially dammed. Famous regattas and other delightful functions are often staged on rivers hardly a dozen yards wide. Nature has provided a wonderful green setting and man does the rest. He dresses becomingly and sets out to enjoy himself. He poles his punt, careful to provide it with flaming cushions, a few pretty girls with Japanese sunshades, a picnic basket, and unfortunately a gramophone. The more energetic belong to rowing clubs. Should their school lie near a river, they have to decide whether to become " Wet Bobs " or " Dry Bobs," according as their tastes lie in the direction of rowing or games. Rowing-men, at Oxford and Cambridge or elsewhere, are usually the more robust type, for they have a severer training and consequently less

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HENLEY REGATTA

opportunity and inclination for other pursuits. Rowing and racing are not easy in the winding rivers and to their narrowness is due the vogue for bumping races in which the boats row one behind the other, each trying to bump the one in front. The Thames at London is exceptional, for it has a wide surface, though inclined to be rough. But up-river it is ideal, especially between Kingston and Henley, where natural beauties crowd thick upon each other. At Henley itself the river makes a wide sweep beneath a wooded hill and provides the finest course in the world, wide, sufficiently calm and ideally situated.

Henley is nearer to Oxford than to London and this circumstance alone is sufficient to give a somewhat exclusive note to the spectators. Not that distance is any bar, for Epsom, the scene of the Derby, lies at a considerable distance from London. Henley week is an aristocratic affair, not a spectacle for the masses, although there is infinitely more to be seen there than at the Boat Race, in which the only contestants are an Oxford and Cambridge eight. Yet, at the Boat Race both banks of the river are crowded for miles with thousands of spectators among whom the lower classes predominate. Little can be seen of the race, and before you can get a glimpse it is all over. Nor can betting be the attraction, as Cambridge always wins. At Henley there are dozens of races in which schools, colleges, rowing-clubs and foreign visitors take part. Yet the historic Boat Race alone has charms for the masses, which seems

to prove how much the popularity of sport depends on custom and fashion. People persuade themselves that the Boat Race is "the thing," and the press, which now thinks for the masses, lends its powerful support. As soon as thousands think a thing is worth flocking to, they do it for its own sake. It becomes a popular holiday in which the rowers are like the horses at the Derby ; the result is a kind of general hysteria accompanied by boisterousness and a certain amount of alcohol. In any case it's an opportunity for doing nothing and getting excited.

Without prejudice to the technical knowledge of the spectators, or the enormous effort of the performers, the most interesting part of the Boat Race is surely the craving of the masses for excitement. The race is another outlet for mental repression.

At the smaller Oxford boat-races, an excited crowd of enthusiasts, adherents of this crew or that, runs along the tow-path. On this and other occasions you would think the spectators had thrown to the winds the last shreds of respectability and were in the final stages of hysteria, so near do they seem to bursting point. A bit hysterical perhaps, but why not blow off steam ? It's quite a healthy complaint. No wonder the Englishman wants to be wild and natural occasionally ; he so seldom has the opportunity. At such times the undergraduate either gets dead drunk, or if sober has a destructive fit. Furniture and crockery are smashed, or else a rag is organised with its excesses of various and novel kinds.

In his own way the man in the street does the same ; he shouts and gets drunk, becomes genially vulgar, and finally falls asleep. The older people of the upper classes have had so many opportunities of letting themselves go, both in sport and life generally, that they can afford to overlook these little outbreaks on the part of their sons and of the people.



“ HORSE-SENSE ”

HORSE-SENSE—a sympathetic understanding of horses or however one cares to interpret this expression which I here use to sum up all the romance and subtle implications of “horsiness”—is another of the things unfortunately condemned to extinction in England. When games in which the horse figures become restricted to a few participants old traditions are inevitably lost. To-day eighty per cent. of the British population live in the large cities, and the tendency of towns is to become increasingly hostile to the noblest of animals, who is as reasonable, good-tempered, well-trained, and as much a sports enthusiast as his master. We can still see and admire these creatures at horse-shows, at Olympia, on the race-course, and in processions, but that is after all a one-sided affair, a makeshift ; it is almost a death-knell. Play associated with any kind of animal has now become the privilege of a very small minority. Thereby the mass of English people have lost one of their play associations which has satisfied their imagination for centuries. Soon we shall be reduced to a few pet dogs trotting behind old maids ; the rest will either be kept for shows or to provide an excuse for gambling.

It is a mistake to minimise the importance of the

loss involved. It is a result of deep-seated social changes. In the agricultural period the horse and equestrian games were responsible for endless social and psychological links. Work and pleasure were combined and thousands found their lives the richer for it. And these thousands were from the state's point of view a valuable asset ; jolly, open-air people with an old-fashioned appetite and thirst, the usual accompaniments of fresh air, and the smell of the stable. In this category we must place the conservative traditions of the farmer-class who stand firm, though perhaps not uncomplaining, against all the buffets of fate. Association with horses has curious effects ; it not only enlarges the mental horizon, but horse-sense in England forges a link of understanding between all who possess it. They become interdependent ; the trainer is as important as the owner. These things can't be done by the tote. The Englishman whose play is mechanised lives in an entirely different world. Relations lose their personal flavour and any advantages on the intellectual side are poorly compensated for by the loss of the human touch. Association with animals in sport has had a very definite moulding effect on English character.

A few hundred years ago the difference between town and country life was not very marked in spite of the poor means of communication, for town life in the old days would seem very much like country life to us moderns. Latterly, the distinction has become sharper, although the

high-water mark seems now to have been passed. Better communications, the gramophone, the cinema and wireless, have had the effect of radically changing the nature of country-life and making it approximate to that of the town. This means radical changes in the domain of sport, of which more elsewhere. One of them, at least, falls naturally into this chapter, the replacement of living toys by mechanical, of the horse by horse-power. Looking at the London streets the visitor would find little to lead him to believe that England is the classic home of horse-breeding and trading. The stately carriages, the four-in-hands with their horns, the magnificent teams of dray-horses, which we see in pictures of historic London, have practically vanished. The Coaching Club or private enterprise of one kind and another may sometimes organise journeys on the famous old mail-coaches or four-in-hands and at times you see a carriage and pair outside the opera. But even when the King comes to Ascot in state he does not drive from Windsor Castle, but changes from car to four-in-hand just outside the course. The horse is becoming superfluous, something for show and ornament—even in England. In London it is only in the East End that horses are seen in any numbers. Most of the magnificent stables of the West End, the mews at the back of the town houses, have long since been converted into garages or flats. Even the riders in the famous Rotten Row in Hyde Park drag out a wretched existence choked by oil and petrol fumes. The rich have long since

ceased to keep horses in town, and consequently their famous parade ground has fallen into the hands of livery-stable keepers and a few nouveaux riches. A few faithful adherents of the old custom are still in evidence and the King rides occasionally in the park, but the former glory has passed. The horse is banished to the country. And even there its existence is threatened, for England is now covered by a close network of asphalt and concrete roads, impossible for either riding or driving. Most landed proprietors tend more and more to favour the motor-car if they are obliged to choose. The cost of living often forces them to do so—one has to save somewhere. But if only twenty per cent. of England's population now live in the country, the number of those who can afford to keep horses is still tolerably large. This is mainly because the small landowner in England does not belong to the peasant class, but is a gentleman, if only in a small way, a farmer or a person of independent means with a taste for country-life. As most of the country consists of grass-land it is needless to say that cattle-raising and horse-breeding are largely followed. The style maintained naturally varies with the degree of one's prosperity, but there is very little class distinction between large and small proprietors. To maintain the tradition of country squire is their main aim and object. For these reasons English country life has a distinct sporting flavour. Riding and training animals form part of a farmer's calling. The winner of a big competition often comes from the stable

of quite a small farmer ; winning hunters and race horses are often home bred and home trained by such people.

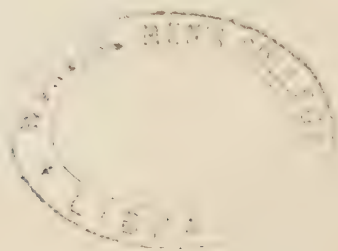
The small garrison in German provincial towns used to furnish horses and riders for the local races, but in England it is farmers and small country squires who keep up the tradition of the countryside. Horse and agricultural shows with their animal exhibits afford excellent opportunities, for they always include equestrian competitions, riding, driving and jumping, in which men, women and children all take part. The local shows are real popular festivals, and are replete with good humour, energy and life. While those which take place at a considerable distance from London are the most typical, the most important of its kind is the Royal Horse Show held annually in the Deer-park at Richmond ; this is one of the great sporting events of the spring season. But even at Richmond, where from four to five hundred horses take part in the various competitions, the horse show maintains its genial rustic character. The proletarian masses keep away, but the grounds are crowded with horsey people, trainers, farmers and retired folk of every kind. Here you see the typical John Bull with his ruddy face, his wonderful checked breeches, a characteristic figure little seen except in the country. They come in families, numbers of children too, for dozens of boys and girls under fifteen take part in the children's riding competitions. It is indeed a difficult matter for judges to make their selection among all the fearless

young horsemen and the extraordinarily handsome amazons of tender years, so calmly and collectedly do they trot round on their gallant mounts. Both the driving and jumping competitions afford striking examples of training and horsemanship. In the jumping competitions the spectator is particularly struck by the perfect control of both horse and rider. It is amusing to see aged army chargers, their riders apparently half-asleep, carry off the big prizes from flashy French and Swedish competitors. The Englishman, as is well known, does not shine in *haute école*, but he approaches this little duty of life from its lighter and more natural side. He lets his horse run and jump practically unchecked, for his riding-school is the open country intersected by hedges and streams. English landscape has few wide open stretches, but is cut up by fences, mostly composed of hedge ; in some localities the fields are surrounded by stone walls. As a consequence the main feature of cross-country riding consists in overcoming these countless varieties of obstacle. Most English horses can jump, in fact they must, for they are bred among the English hedges and not on the open steppe. Thus, riding is largely a cross-country business over hill and dale, and hunting is a natural growth. The gentry on their admirable mounts in front, the farmers and half the village in the rear. Thus the most typical kind of English racing began, and its character has been maintained.

In marked contrast to the exclusiveness of continental hunting, the English sport forms an

integral part of traditional country-life. Even to-day almost any one is allowed to follow the hounds, and in actual practice the country people are keen participants ; there are numerous women followers and often enough children on their ponies. So long as English farmers exist, hunting is not likely to lose its traditional character. There are, of course, certain limitations arising from the fact that one hunts over private property, and that the hounds, whether they hunt fox or stag, belong to a " hunt " which is a kind of club. But in every famous hunting centre there are stables where any one can provide himself with a mount.

The jumps one meets with are often quite formidable. Hunting and point-to-point, which has now severed its connection with hunting and is more a kind of racing without a race-course, often bring one up against obstacles which compare not unfavourably with the terrific jumps of the Grand National. To witness this greatest and most difficult of the world's steeplechases is a wonderful experience for keen sportsmen. The strangest thing about it is that the horses appear quite to enjoy these formidable obstacles. Even old age does not teach them wisdom. And why should a man have more sense than a horse ? Both have horse sense. After all it's sport.



DERBY DAY

YEAR in, year out, the doors of museums, picture-galleries, libraries, cathedrals and castles are thrown open. Year in, year out, schoolbooks, newspapers, and time-tables are perused. Year in, year out, we are flooded with masses of information, description and experience. But only one day in the year is Derby Day. Wherever the English masses congregate—sports-grounds, boat-races, the Albert Hall, the Cenotaph, the “Kursaal” at Southend, fêtes, Hampstead Heath—we are up against real life. On such occasions we realise the hopeless inadequacy of mere learning which pursues its laborious investigations into thousands of things which, left alone, come gradually to the surface by dint of pressure from within. But at no time or place does English character stand so clearly revealed, so unreservedly and unconstrainedly naked, as on the Epsom Downs on the day of the Derby Stakes. What are the handful of statesmen, philosophers, financiers, and captains of industry compared with the millions of the masses and the thousands of submerged? Of what account are the few hundred men in black or gray top-hats and morning-coats thronging the Epsom grand-stand, compared with the surging mass which covers the surface of the Downs?

We may know a good deal about this statesman or that, about the party-machine he controls to organise his millions of adherents, but what do we know of the lives and sentiments of these millions themselves ? We regard the well-groomed Englishman as typical ; he is the picture of refinement, the smooth product of the traditional religion of externals ; schoolmaster, parson, Saville Row have done their best to turn him out as he is. But are not the millions much more the real thing ? Don't they show us what really lies behind silk shirt and morning coat, behind the veneer of Eton or the rougher panelling of the County School ? The lord and the clerk who tries to ape him are in the same boat. Fundamentally there is no difference between them and the man who sells fish and chips for a tanner.

The Derby is the biggest and most representative English festival. People flock there in their hundreds of thousands, from every class, from every part of the country. The lives of thousands seem to revolve around this one centre ; thousands who appear to be on the verge of starvation, or are reduced to tatters, willingly spend their last penny on the Derby. The soberest citizen, the most uncompromising miser, now become reckless gamblers and spendthrifts. The New Grand Stand accommodates twenty thousand, and there are many others, and none of the seats are free. Yet brave fathers and mothers of families, accustomed to look twice at every penny, pay two pounds for a seat without demur, despite the amount of

free standing-room available. The principal race is not run until about three in the afternoon, but from the first glimmer of dawn the Downs are thronged with masses of humanity. Not a few arrive the evening before and camp here and there among the bushes, beneath a cloud of mist lying cold and damp upon the landscape. The rheumatic awakening of whole families in the gray atmosphere of the dawn must be one of the most piquant experiences of Derby Day, although enjoyed only by the minority. The main body of spectators begin their long tramp or drive, as the case may be, in the early morning. Then everything on wheels joins the motley procession towards Epsom ; little market-carts and four-in-hands, donkey-carts and dog-carts, Rolls-Royces and charabancs, the small Fords of the East End shopkeepers beside the hundreds of double-decker omnibuses, chartered by business-houses, clubs or miscellaneous private parties. Many London business-houses are closed for the occasion. Thousands of small shopkeepers would not miss the Derby at any cost. It is the poor man's show. So, off to the Downs, any way you like, Pullman or Shanks' pony !

Epsom Downs to the south of London sweep in the form of a natural amphitheatre round a level plain. Here a beautiful stretch of turf terminates at one end in more broken country covered with bushes. Opposite the miles of stands the country rises gently in an acclivity which occupies the centre of the sweeping course. The grand stand situated near the winning-post forms as it were the stage

of the theatre. But it is not the side where the stands are, but the gigantic natural auditorium, which provides the greatest spectacle of the day. Here an enormous mass is collected, for the slope affords an excellent view of the stands and the ribbon of turf on which the fate of some millions of pounds is decided—in two and a half minutes. The hill forms the centre of a canvas city erected by the people for the people. Here they stand or camp out in their tens of thousands ; here they drink, chatter, dance, eat and bet. There is no entrance money for this part of the show, and there is little evidence of police control. Around this canvas city, this Epsom East End, a vast circle of suburbs collects, comprising visitors of every description, until about mid-day a regular system is built up like a living counterpart of cosmopolitan London. Here is the West End with its dandies and epicures, here the new ferro-concrete palace with its comfortable stands, restaurants and offices, its private boxes and royal enclosure. Next the cheaper quarters of the prosperous and aspiring, who pay their twelve or fifteen shillings ; their buffets are crowded with beer bottles and sandwiches in contrast to the champagne of the better district. Close by are the narrow open strips in front of the railings bounding the course, just as Piccadilly, the show-part of the capital, is only separated by a stone's throw from a slum. Next we have the idyllic picturesqueness of the garden suburbs, three hundred scarlet omnibuses drawn up closely in rows. Their upper decks are crowded with

spectators, while their interiors have become inviting dining-rooms with snowy table-linen. Here we have islands of the solid middle-class, huge blocks of private cars of every kind with a swarming in and out as with the omnibuses of the next lower class, but with just a shade more elegance and refinement. All around stretches the festive throng representing the East End, the proletariat of London, and nine-tenths of the great city.

How poverty-stricken the life of the rich seems compared with the whirl of existence of the poor and the beggar on a day like this ! What a difference in tempo and rhythm ! The rich sit in their boxes and if they want to move they promenade with leisurely elegance to the enclosure. But in the area occupied by the masses life surges in whirlpools of primitive vehemence, pagan freedom and æsthetic nonchalance which would be offensive had it not the excuse of pure naturalism. This is the chaos which gave birth to Shakespearean burlesque.

The entertainments provided are of the simplest kind. Bank Holiday on Hampstead Heath means a whole regiment of merry-go-rounds, houp-la's, swing-boats ; you pass one cocoanut-shy after another, and the number of amusements is inexhaustible. There is little of all this on Epsom Downs ; the central figure is man himself ; money and horses are but means to an end. As a carnival of humanity it is incomparable in history, a careless swell, an unbridled current of not only the lower but the lowest classes. No less remarkable is

the variety of types represented. Every second person is a surprise, every third a monstrosity. A strange, primitive, unconstrained mass, with a few lords parading in the background. The calm, collected Englishman is the product of Puritanism, or at any rate of exhausted vitality. But the masses are mobile in the extreme and filled with energy as robust as it is unconstrained. Even women on this occasion throw all restraint to the winds and laugh, live and enjoy themselves to the top of their bent.

There is no compunction about these people ; they swelter in their thousands in an atmosphere of beer, kippers and pickled whelks ; glass after glass of liquor pours down well-seasoned throats. The numerous marquees where you can buy drinks and indigestible brandy-snaps are thronged from start to finish. There are groups of people, fat, thin, young and old, well-dressed, or in tatters, workers and work-shy, good and bad, handsome and hideous ; men, women and children, on the ground or at tables, in tents and outside, in the height of good spirits or happily maudlin, some exuberant, others stupidly drunk ; some listless, others full of eagerness ; but all primitive and animal, all getting their own particular form of enjoyment out of the day. Dancing here, singing there, elsewhere they lie in close embrace upon the ground. Music, laughter, and din without end. Everything is natural, everything primitive, nothing puritanical ; no concealment or hypocrisy. Not far from the Royal Entrance sits a mother

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DERBY DAY

suckling her baby, no usual sight for respectable England. Farther away, in the Epsom East End, it is common enough ; the mother's eyes betray the results of a thirst as great as her baby's. Music blares from the tents on every side, popular songs with their catchy harmonies, or merry dance-tunes. Here a dirty ragged boy plays a mouth-organ like a professional, beating out the rhythm of the dance with his tambourine. Here a woman three feet high sings Irish melodies in lively measure, while her neighbour, an old man with an exaggerated Cockney accent, gives the favourite songs of the day to the accompaniment of a home-made banjo. Near at hand some one is playing a guitar to a party giving a tasteful display of ancient folk-dancing. Their ranks are swelled by joyful adherents. Now a tall and lanky flower-seller pulls a wooden flute out of his basket to play the jolly frothblower's tune for a dozen shopgirls from the East End, "The more we are together, together . . ." Yes, frothblowing is the order of the day, and these young ladies, and some not so young, do full honour to this League which has spread over the country since the war. The beerier the merrier ! The day is sultry and faces stream with sweat, but ladies, some with thin legs, some with fat, go on dancing with the persistency of a nigger ballet, and while they step it left and right, fore and back, they balance glasses of golden liquor in their sweaty hands. People of every temperament join hands on this happy occasion ; you meet every shade of good taste and bad.

Honest fishwives, respectable matrons of the ancient order of flower-sellers in their curious feather-hats, rub shoulders with sullen prostitutes from the East End. Old fishermen with luxurious beards and unsavoury criminals drain their glasses side by side. Gipsies in red shawls and yellow dresses lie in curiously tragic groups in front of their caravans. The Gipsy Queen reads startling fortunes in the palms of city girls, while Negro-Professor Luck, "The Chief Umgazzi," as his placard announces, is making prognostications from the skull of an honest greengrocer.

Through the crowd wander the wags, tipsters, bookies, and an endless procession of people with something to recommend, sell or hire, if only a pair of steps to climb the railings of the course. Now come the secret police and pietists with placards announcing that death is nearer than we think. But the bookies' placards claim more attention. No English race-course, least of all this super-course on the Epsom Downs, is complete without its army of bookmakers. They are a *sine qua non* of the fantastic motion-picture and its polyphonous accompaniment. The enormous enthusiasm for betting could never be satisfied with any other system than the English which replaces the central totalisators by thousands of bookmakers. Take away the Englishman's beer and his betting and only a handful will remain of the half-million faithful supporters of Derby Day. The Englishman is betting-mad. But when he bets he likes to bet with a man and not with a machine.

And here is the man ; let us say Mr. Lewis of Blackburn. He is clad in a crazy straw hat and marvellous checks. A ticket on his chest announces his name and address. Furthermore, a placard tells the world that you can't get fairer treatment anywhere. If you go to enough races you get to know him personally. So do the police. So does the tax-collector, for since 1926 he has to pay a tax on his transactions. In his hand is a book and he is supported by an assistant who enters all transactions in the ledger. There is a table showing the names of the horses and the odds, 2-1, 10-1, 50-1, according to circumstances, and the assessment of the market as tic-tacked from Tattersall's. You pay your shilling or your pound as the case may be, and win 2, 10, or 50 if your horse comes in. The odds continually vary ; a horse standing now at 4-1 may five minutes later shorten to 3-1. It's like being on change, noise and all. You receive your ticket and pray that your bookie, if luck goes against him, does not do a guy, as sometimes happens outside the enclosure. Sometimes there's a free fight, but on the whole the business is conducted with scrupulous honesty, which for the East End of Epsom is rather remarkable. A top-hat is no recommendation for fair dealing. The whole betting system is based on credit, and you don't even get a receipt for your money, much less a written statement of the odds given—merely a number.

The system of betting and bookmakers represents the only active participation of the masses in the

sporting side of the events. Wherever you are it's only a few steps to the nearest bookie. This exaggeration of the betting part of the business is the greatest blot on racing. This spurious enthusiasm has nothing in common with real sport. To the masses perhaps the magnificent horses mean something ; the popular jockeys come next in popular estimation ; the owners, who are responsible for keeping the show going, come in for a share, to say nothing of the Royal Family, who take a keen interest. The whole business awakes enthusiasm, but the game is primarily a money-game. English racing is intimately associated with mad speculation.

Here natural human sport wears a highly capitalistic garb. It would be useless to deny that the sporting experiences of the people have thereby gained in adventure and dramatic intensity. There is hardly a cook, schoolboy, artisan, in brief, hardly an average English man or woman, who has not a " bit on " something or other, and the number of wagerers are many times greater than those who witness the sport itself. It is useless to argue whether these people bet because they are sportsmen or whether they bet for betting's sake. It is true that some bet for the thrill it gives to racing, but it is hardly a matter of sport when a people is continually occupied with betting and sweepstakes ; it's mere gambling, and it makes no difference whether it is with horses or on the stock exchange. The link of association at these race-meetings is money and playing with money ; playing

fairly if you like, but sport thereby loses a great part of its essential character and value. This is most clearly shown by the latest London sport, dog-racing, which has been instituted at the White City by a money-making group. This sport has been introduced from Manchester and America with great financial success, for on many evenings no less than sixty thousand people assemble to see greyhounds course an electric hare. The book-makers look after the rest of the entertainment. The whole business is a ghastly capitalistic monstrosity unworthy of the sporting traditions of the British people. *Circenses* at their worst. Perhaps it is wrong to mention them in a chapter devoted to the Derby, which is, after all, a unique historic institution. The popular festival at Epsom has arisen spontaneously without the assistance of financiers. But the example of the White City shows how the desire for thrill and gambling, neither of them very pleasant aspects of sport, can be and are exploited by financial enterprise.

The Derby with its atmosphere of sport, beer and gambling engenders a feeling of loyalty and fellowship astounding to the observer. The tumultuous squatting-ground of the East End is to a great extent the public car-park ; luxurious limousines, huge brakes and a veritable arsenal of miscellaneous rolling-stock pour across the Downs and mix with the grazing horses of the costers' carts, the gipsies' ponies and the whole paraphernalia of the carnival. Few of the elegant occupants of the grand stand come over to see the hurly-burly ; it is enough

for them to know of its existence. But any top-hats that find their way across, any elegant turn-outs whose departure breaks up some proletarian beanfeast or East End siesta, cause not the slightest offence. Every one takes it as a matter of course, indeed as a pleasure and an honour, that the rich are there and that they exist.

At the final exodus from stand to carriage or station there is no distinction whatever ; they are all Derbyites, a single class. Each has his part and plays it. The order of the day is not to be a nuisance to oneself and others, but to enjoy what life offers. The thousands who are able to be present are overflowing with happiness—at least for the one great day. Happier anyhow than those who stayed at home.



PREMIERLAND

WE have to go to the East End of London to see the true character of individual games as opposed to team work. Every normal Englishman can box. He learns it at school, keeps it up for fitness' sake, to strengthen his will-power, for amusement, for self-defence, and incidentally to settle his small private differences. The schoolboy goes to the head master to get the gloves and proceeds to calm his ardour with a few smart blows on the chest or the point of the jaw. But the value of boxing as a sport is recognised outside the confines of England. There are no two opinions about the evils, not to say scandals, associated with professional boxing. That a man can make a fortune out of a couple of rounds is a thing which no one will try to justify unless he has made a bigger pile himself out of a sweepstake or by some lucky gamble on the Stock Exchange. These evils are not inherent in the sport as such, but arise from the unhealthy conditions under which it is carried on. If the Albert Hall can nowadays only be filled by a boxing match, when you could get Kreisler instead, the fact at least gives us pause to consider how the people can be usefully entertained otherwise. Meanwhile such places of entertainment in

London, destined primarily for culture, depend mainly on boxing matches for their support. Even C. B. Cochran cannot make the Albert Hall pay unless he puts on a boxing match at regular intervals ; and then gentlemen in evening dress and elegantly attired women pay high prices for their threadbare plush seats, in order that they may enliven the weary round of existence by the excitement of a piquant exhibition. But if any one wants to know the real significance of boxing as a sport in England he must go to the schools, or better still, the East End.

In boxing the fighting spirit is confined within strictly regulated bounds. It offers the more spirited and pugnacious members of society a sporting outlet, something like real battle without transgressing the rules of fine sport. That this rough game can compete with the more leisurely charms of cricket in the Englishman's favour is merely a further indication that his naïveté and naturalism are still to the fore even when he follows his natural instinct for a rough and tumble. There is no fighter like your Nordic. His qualities in this respect are carefully husbanded, but the sporting life of the people absorbs the greater part of the martial spirit and renders it innocuous. Human nature's thunderbolts are directed into a channel where their effect is least harmful. Boxing is in fact one of the best examples of a lightning conductor. Nowhere is the temptation to foul blows or other manifestations of bad temper so great as in a sport whose very points consist in hitting one's opponent

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THE HEIR TO THE THRONE

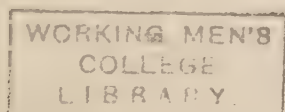
as many blows as possible on mouth, nose and eyes. Nowhere on the other hand is the opportunity so great or tempting for unfair defence. And in England the sport is not confined to schools whose business it is to turn out the Empire's leaders. The young roughs of the East End and youngsters from the lowest classes in the country regard boxing as their most enjoyable diversion. Working Lads' Clubs and similar associations have sprung up all over the country ; they practise boxing systematically and with the utmost sportsmanship and enthusiasm. Any one who attends the numerous public events and championships in which youthful competitors figure can bear witness to their excellent morale and technique.

In fact, the atmosphere of English life, responsible for so many remarkable things, has had the effect of making Whitechapel, the famous Jewish quarter in the East End, one of London's chief boxing centres. Premierland lies in the maze of Whitechapel's streets amid the rows of Sheeny shops where rich and poor live and mix together in an unusual medley. In one of the grimy streets there is a door, in a narrow brick front plastered over with placards, leading to a large desolate domed hall of vulgar design and wretched accommodation. This is Premierland. The ring stands in the middle and beside it a Jewish gentleman who is in charge of the proceedings. The benches round the room are packed with spectators of the lower class, most of them Jews. Drapers' assistants, dockers, small shopkeepers and clerks, out-of-works

and doubtful characters, to say nothing of a sprinkling of colour. Here and there a woman is seen. Even in the ring you find more Jews than any other nationality. And all these Premierland spectators are actually boxers, most of them past or present members of Lads' Clubs ; they are experts and know all the tricks of the trade ; they may be former champions. Boxing is in the nature of the case a sport for the young man, say of seventeen to perhaps seven and twenty on an average. It follows that the spectators in Premierland are quite young, or at most middle-aged. All these onlookers know the ring and its code, they are enthusiastic sportsmen, and their experience makes them impartial judges—doughty fighters to boot. A great number of the most famous English boxers, to say nothing of the Americans, are Jews, past or present holders of various championships. You can generally guess as much from their names, but not always. Though their features are often anglicised, their origin is Jewish. Their physique is magnificent and their sporting morale unquestionable. These Jewish boxers form no exception to the rule that all well-known champions in the art are of humble extraction, and it is the same with the spectators in this Whitechapel gathering. Premierland is open to any youthful aspirant who can be relied on not to disgrace himself nor the management. Every contestant puts forth all his energy to make as good a show as possible, for in such cases the manager will offer him a few pounds to appear on another occasion. If he makes good he may

gradually make his way through bigger and bigger fights until as a full-grown man he reaches the Albert Hall. It is not a matter of common knowledge that this is a favourite career with the Jewish population of the East End. But it is still more remarkable that it is precisely in the country which has the noblest record for its treatment of the Jews that their martial spirit, to which the Bible bears witness, has developed so freely. And England is by no means a loser.

The atmosphere of Premierland is very lively, as is almost always the case with English sport ; but it is also very orderly. The boxing public resembles a very rigid conscience. Thus the conduct of the spectators of Premierland, who also fulfil the rôle of judges without falling foul of the official referee, is also faultless. In one instance, in a fight between a young Jewish champion and an English youth who was not a Londoner, the young Jew, in the heat of the contest, hit his opponent an ugly blow below the belt, unnoticed by the referee who was on the wrong side of the ring to see it. The public uproar persisted until the referee became aware of what had happened and the Jewish confraternity were greatly incensed that the young Jew was not disqualified. From this moment the tide of favour turned in favour of the young Briton and remained with him for the rest of the fight. That is how Whitechapel understands Fair Play. In fact the whole conception of Premierland is a triumph of English sport as an educational force.



THE YOUNGER GENERATION
AT PLAY

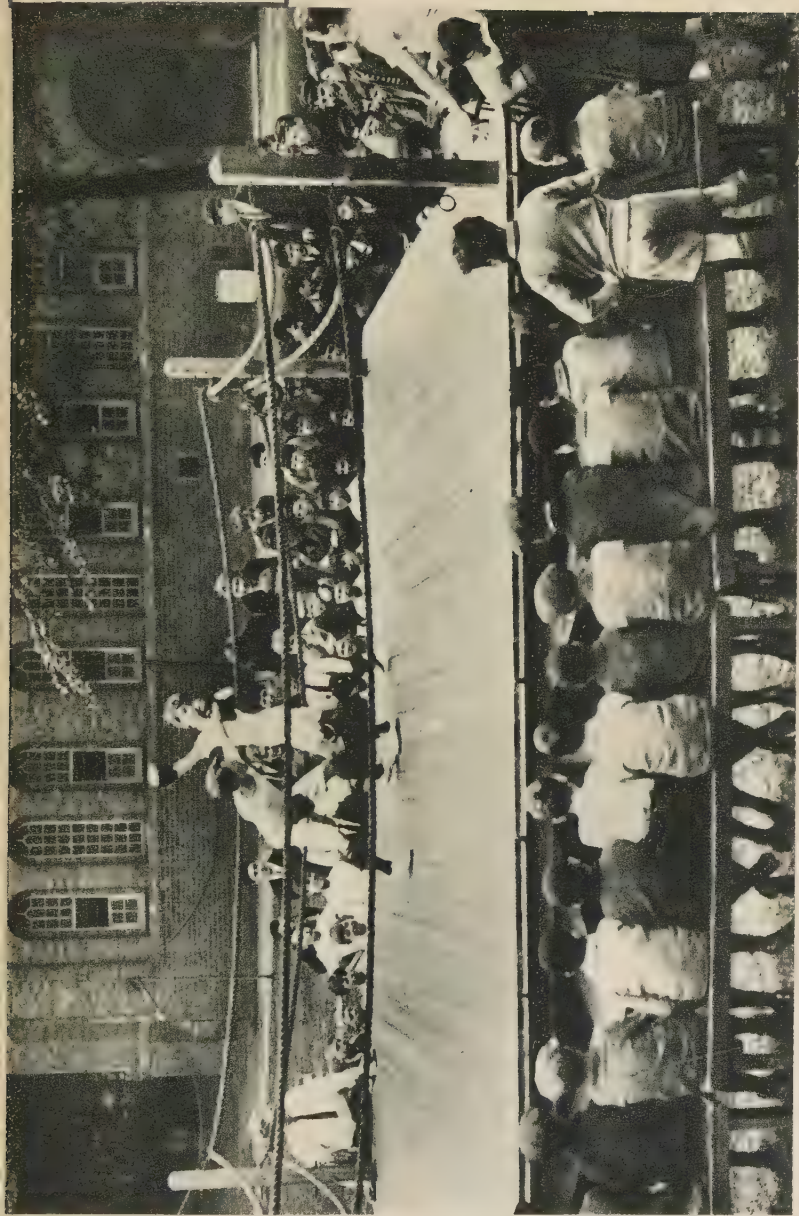
SPORT IN THE SCHOOL

How pleasant public school boys must find it to have their work and play blended together owing to sport being regarded as the finest educational training ! No time-table in these schools leaves sport out of account. Without sport there is no real basis of understanding between master and boy. From his first day at school the boy can rest assured that this pleasant side of life will suffer no diminution. Even the driest lessons fail to inspire dread when a boy knows that it lies with his own choice whether he will learn and study or merely play games. And in the end one may ask oneself whether the date of Cæsar's birth has much to do with the building up of sterling English character. Or what's the use of knowing six languages if you can't get on with your fellow-man ? On the other hand to wear a top-hat with dignity at fifteen is some sort of guarantee of good behaviour, and the boy who does well in team games cannot be entirely ignorant of the social duties of life. While English schools exist there will always be disputes about the advantages and disadvantages of English education. But one is apt to forget in this connection that in the boarding-schools recognised by the state, the total number

of scholars does not much exceed 27,000. Moreover, while the collective high schools of England and Wales have a total attendance of about 370,000 boys and girls, the pupils of the Board Schools number no less than five millions. The great mass of English pupils are therefore as little susceptible to injury by the public school system as they are in a position to enjoy its advantages. According to the latest official statistics, over four millions of the people's schools have no green playing fields, and the children have to do the best they can with the dusty school-yard and the street. Knowing these things one is quite able to appreciate the fact that sport, despite the extraordinary value placed on it by the public schools, cannot have played nearly such an important part in the education of average English youth as one might be led to believe. A survey therefore of conditions in English schools generally lends considerable force to the outcry for making sport more democratic.

It is some consolation, if a small one, that about a quarter of the scholars of the higher-grade schools, the Public Secondary Schools, consist of boys and girls who have come up from the Board Schools by dint of scholarships and grants, and that the number of these secondary schools has multiplied threefold between 1909 and 1920. But the very marked difference between the magnificent provision for games in the public schools, and the wretched state of things in the people's schools, is sufficient proof that in this direction there has been little thought of Fair Play. Either sport

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THE CHAMPIONSHIP OF THE SCHOOL

and play are nothing more than enjoyment for those who have sufficient money and leisure for them, in which case all this talk about educational value is a mere blind ; or else the value is real and, in that case, it seems inconceivable that it took a sporting nation till 1927 to find out that just those who most required a sports education had the least chance of acquiring one. We can never expect games to figure so largely in the Board Schools as in the public schools. The children of the former only remain till the end of their fourteenth year and leave school just at the age when school games seriously begin elsewhere. It also goes without saying that the state or local authorities could only do a fraction of what rich founders and patrons have in former years done for the public schools. Most important of all, when children leave the Board Schools they must necessarily be ready for a practical occupation, as workers and bread-winners and, however crying be the need in the directions we have been considering, it would be impossible to give up a large share of time to other things than pure learning. But at the public schools the boys remain until their eighteenth or nineteenth year and it is an accepted fact that the oldest and most famous of these schools do not set out to prepare boys for an occupation ; they regard themselves as human training-grounds in the widest sense. The youths leave them for the University or other training institutions, if only an office in the city. It is only more recently that a group of public schools has specialised more directly on training

for careers—technical, mathematical or economic as the case may be ; and *pari passu* with their development the games side of the curriculum has lost its special privileges. But even in such cases sport does not cease to be regarded as of the highest educational value.

In the great and ancient schools like Eton and Harrow athleticism is still of paramount importance, but hardly in the exaggerated degree which was prevalent in most of the larger public schools in the eighties and nineties, following the example of Eton. As a matter of fact this exaggeration stood in the sharpest contrast to their traditions and original intention. Even in those days of blatant muscularity it was generally maintained that the only thing aimed at was a compromise between mind and body. But the sparing of the youthful brain and the exaggeration of muscular training brought forth nothing better than an army of robust warriors for a highly materialistic period, that of imperialism. Under her present head Eton has returned to greater respect for thinking and knowledge. While athletes still set the tone, students and Collegers have increased their prestige, without ceasing to be good sportsmen. But the public schools will never win back the traditional glory of learning which characterised past ages. This is possibly because accounts of those old days conferred on the student a halo which he never deserved. But if at that time English youth was more amenable to cloistered wisdom it was only the case with a small circle of boys belonging to

good and God-fearing families. To-day the public schools draw their recruits from further afield and the tendency is towards broadening the area. Moreover, between those days and ours came the period of Puritanism which degenerated into fanaticism and hypocrisy. The best England can hope for is a wiser combination of sport and learning in her schools ; more sport and play for the poor and more work for the rich. But this is just the tendency in England at the present time. The younger generation of all classes promises to be educated more on a uniform level than was the case with the one which has passed away. Sport as a means to education will gain in significance through bringing games to a lower level of the population.

The greater unity referred to above is obvious, for, whether English boys wear top-hats, strange monstrosities in straw, or the modest school-cap, they are still, be it said without offence, ordinary healthy, jolly scalawags at bottom. Sturdy, brimming with initiative and energy, they are regular volcanoes of youthful spirits. Aristotle's "purging of the emotions" is a necessity for youngsters of this kind. School games divert their explosiveness into the play-attitude. The value placed on athleticism in English schools does not mean a mad pursuit of records and scores, although such things are by no means unknown. The Eton and Harrow match is in fact a battle, a battle fraught with deeds of heroism, with love and hate. But fundamentally school sport means only a happy and orderly game.

played with balls and colours. These solemn young gentlemen in their black coats and top-hats, or the collegers in their gowns, have to be seen on the playing-field to be really understood ; it is only then that we can appreciate the real link between the Board School and the Eton boy. On the playing-field the black garb disappears, and you see nothing but very happy, lively boys. Now it's all life and colour. To the schoolboy "colours" have a very special meaning ; his ambition is to win the coveted right to wear such and such a cap or colour. These things are fraught with mystery. The layman only sees a delightful panorama of countless coloured caps, ties, blazers and stockings. To those who wear them they are a source of love and romance. This inexhaustible fund of solidarity is enjoyed by each team, house, group, by the school itself, every school, finally by the whole of England. And the feeling is of permanent duration. It appeals not to the intellect so much as to the emotion, and this they all possess. Eton erects, emphasises or maintains social barriers : a serious reproach, and by no means the only one. But Eton is merely the apex of the pyramid. The Eton of games and colours permeates England and the whole of English life. Unfortunately, however, for millions to-day these things lie only in the realm of ambition.



THE BOY SCOUT MOVEMENT

No one in England would attempt to divert the crises of youth into an intellectual channel, nor to make development in this direction a means of sublimation or an outlet for the emotions. For this very reason there is no room in the country for anything like the German Youth-movement. The play-attitude is itself the chief obstacle. On the other hand the Boy Scout movement provides English youth, in addition to games, with a complete and unique remedy entirely in accord with the English temperament. It affords opportunities for the employment and development of both body and mind and, while in many ways it is equivalent from an educational point of view to school games, in others it transcends them. Scouting offers all the advantages of games, for athletics are included in the Scouts' programme ; on the other hand it meets one of youth's very insistent demands which ordinary sport neglects, in that it opens up wide vistas to the romantic side of a child's nature and the craving for phantasy which is his birthright. Moreover, his interest is awakened in a thousand directions in which useful knowledge is to be obtained ; and most of the pursuits make a strong appeal to the young Briton, because he is a born naturalist and pioneer. But "service," in the social

sense, is the immediate object of the Scout movement.

Baden Powell and others associated with him laid down two lines of development for scouts, either of which a Scout troop can follow more or less according to its inclination, "Scoutcraft" and "Woodcraft." Scoutcraft embraces all games which have to do with rambling and camping-out, while woodcraft consists of elementary natural history, a scheme of study and play embracing plant and animal life. The members themselves have not been altogether orthodox in the acceptance of first principles and have somewhat extended their bounds. A troop which adopts scoutcraft is more inclined to practical and technical activities. In particular it specialises on "hobbies"; the boys compete for one or more of the innumerable badges awarded for special proficiency, as in carpentry, cooking, electrical engineering, gardening, horse-mastership, cycling, as the case may be. They may even specialise as firemen. The list contains dozens of trades and specialities, but of course as a rule only the elements of instruction or perhaps merely an awakening of interest come within the scope of the programme. A scout who takes up woodcraft does not necessarily confine himself to nature study, but goes in mainly for "playing Indians." Tracking and similar pursuits form part of every scout's education but in "Indian" games proficiency in this respect has a pre-eminent importance. It is obvious that the one category is more suited to the towns while the other appeals

more to troops who have plenty of open space available for their adventures. But the camp-fire and all the romance of the Indian cult are indispensable to the Scout movement. They call themselves by Indian names and have all sorts of secret signs and tokens. Every scout knows his war-dance—sometimes they are old folk-dances—his war-cry, and what they are pleased to call music. And the degree in which boisterous energy and childish fancy have to be restrained by the leaders is most clearly shown in this romantic side of the movement. The lengths to which childish fancy is apt to lead are extraordinary.

But play is by no means the sole end. The scouts have ten commandments. One of them runs :—" A Scout's duty is to be useful and to help others." Another adds :—" A Scout is a friend to all, and a brother to every other Scout, no matter to what social class the other belongs." Finally, " A Scout is courteous." These commandments stand at the gate-way of social work. " Be prepared," is the motto of all scouts. Ready at every moment to do their duty, to help others and to be serviceable. Preparedness of the body and character, preparedness for all life's little adventures, preparedness also for the greatest social and political emergency. Picking up his mother's bag or the defence of Belgium, both are of the same importance in the curriculum. The scout's good deed may be of the merest trifle ; it would almost appear that attention to these minor details is of the greatest psychological importance ; the

principle is regard for every creature, if only a bird or a cat. But the duty of being useful takes the scout even into the East End ; troops help in the house, or in business : they carry in the coals for the needy, attend to their comfort and make many other contributions, often quite inconspicuous, to social life ; it was the war which taught them to do so. A scout's loyalty knows no bounds ; it comprises the king, his own parents, his officers ; it must be observed to those under him, even to his employer.

It is in their capacity of " Rovers " that the scouts appear in their most social light. The term applies to those over eighteen who are still prepared to be active protagonists of the scout idea. These Rovers continue to play, camp and be Indians as enthusiastically as before, but in addition they have to do serious practical scout-work, chiefly organising and co-operating in the leadership of new troops, especially in the large towns. Of course, it means a considerable sacrifice and trenches on their spare time. These young men, in twos and threes, visit the wretched quarters of the East End, strike up acquaintance with poor boys, call on the parents, collect the boys into a troop, teach them cleanliness, and take them for the first time in their lives into the fresh air of the countryside. They organise their games, arouse interests, bring out their latent qualities so far unknown to the possessors. They encourage them to save up for a few months the wretched pence they can scrape together until they are able gradually to get together the bit of necessary

scout-equipment. The Rovers often add a bit from their own exiguous pocket-money, invite the party to tea or pay their tram-fares for an excursion. They teach the boys how the poorest can turn an honest penny if he is resourceful. Bazaars are organised or any other means of collecting a few pounds or even shillings for the newly founded troop. Then in the holidays they set out for their camp in the green fields of the country and the boys are taught to see the pleasant side of work ; and when these wretched slum children return home their parents hardly know them. They were not very keen on all this business when the young Rover first made his appearance ; they regarded him askance as an intruder from another class. Now they see what lies behind it all and the Rover has his reward. And well he has deserved it for his self-sacrifice. It would have been far more pleasant to go into the country with his own friends, and to have thought of his own pleasures rather than other people's.

And in this way the happy play of children ends in serious social service. The Scout movement penetrates deeply into the lower layers of the social pyramid. The chief leaders and organisers of the movement are people of good social position, but the bulk of scouts belong to the lower middle class. The chief public schools also have their Scout troops but the life of a boarder at one of these has so much variety to offer that there is little time and less inclination for scouting. Moreover, the public schools are more wrapped up in the purely militaristic Cadet Corps and Officers' Training Corps,

and service in these is wellnigh obligatory. To this extent, at least among the elder boys, scouting suffers. But while the members of the Cadet Corps number hardly 80,000, the tale of English Scouts has arisen in the last twenty years or so to 300,000. They are all active members and the number is increasing. There are from three to four million boys qualified by age to be scouts, namely from twelve to eighteen years, so that the percentage of members is quite considerable. In addition there are somewhere about 380,000 Girl Guides in the intentionally separate female organisation of the Scout movement. The blossoming of this tenderer bough clearly shows that scouting means a good deal more than mere drill. Playing at soldiers is not at all in the English girl's line. She doesn't easily lose her head. English girls are often the last word in grace and charm, but they are sterling characters as well. They may not be very keen on knitting and embroidery and they do housework only as a side line, although they are very handy at it. The ideal of female education embraces a kind of keenness, preparedness for life and hearty good-fellowship. Hence quite a remarkable number take up scouting.

The danger of the movement is not militarism. Although there has been a certain amount of wavering as the result of the war, the movement has finally stood firm on a pacific footing. Scouts have to think nationally and patriotically, but the English usually need no military symbols to engender these feelings. So much freedom is allowed to the

individual troops that many of them are openly pacifist. Enthusiasm for the League of Nations and like institutions, and especially the great international work of the London Headquarters—there are nearly two million scouts in the whole world—have too obvious a propagandist value to be entirely convincing. Such a policy does not, however, run counter to the national aims of the movement, for without national pride there can be no true internationalism. But a real danger to the scout-movement lies in the difficult problem of leadership. Every troop naturally requires a Scoutmaster and he must be a man able to go straight to the hearts of boys who are very much younger than he is. And although the Englishman preserves an enormous fund of boyishness and keeps up his fondness for games until quite an advanced age, a great deal of elasticity and sympathy are required to keep these boyish minds, with their romantic phantasies, occupied and attentive. It may be fairly easy to find people ready to give technical instruction to these boys and capable of doing so, even of directing the actual scout curricula, but it must be extremely difficult to manage the “Indian” part of the business. The result is that the task is often entrusted to people who are too wooden and slow in the uptake to entertain these young people and keep them interested; as a result these leaders take refuge in drill and other absurdities of the same kind. Should they be narrow-minded into the bargain they make the scout’s life a burden to him by enforced religious

observance ; this is quite contrary to the spirit of the movement, for the scouts swear allegiance to God, but not to any creed. Church parade has caused many a good scout to turn away in disgust. The problem of leadership, however, looks like improving for, since the Rover organisation came into existence after the war, the number of efficient leaders is constantly growing. And these are young men who have been through the ranks and are ready to devote themselves further to the movement.



THE PLAY-ATTITUDE IN DRAMA

REMOVING A MISCONCEPTION

It is one of the functions of games to relieve the feelings, but there are some kinds of tension which cannot be dissipated in this way. Among the English the desire for laughter and comedy and the craving for sensation and tragedy are almost as strong as their need for a sporting outlet. The idea most people have of London, regarded in the light of a metropolis of pleasure and dramatic expression, is a very false one. What we see in London, and at least on the surface of the large English towns, is merely a distortion which always takes place when capital has a free run to abuse art for the sake of money-making. The claims of capital, and especially the rents which lessees have to pay the landlords, are so enormous that no country in the world could find a solution which would do justice both to art and capital simultaneously. Certainly it would be a great task at a time when, as in the last thirty years, the class of people who want diversion and enjoyment has so enormously increased in the great towns. It is a class too without sufficient education or tradition in these matters to produce artistic taste. Even apart from the financial aspect the London theatres would find the task hopeless at present. They, as well as concert-halls, not only have to pay a high tax, amounting

on an average to twenty per cent, but a fabulous rental in addition. London originally belonged to a few great dukes until gradually the ownership split up ; but whole districts still belong to individual families. Ground-rents in London in addition to ordinary rents and leases have, thanks to this system, reached enormous dimensions, and the result is reflected in the whole of commercial economics. Theatres and concert-halls are not in a position to pass on this burden and one can well imagine what it means if a theatre, in addition to all other expenses, has to pay a sum of five or six hundred pounds or even a thousand pounds a week in rent. For this reason the management of a theatre has become a matter of pure finance, and intricate finance at that. And, knowing this, one cannot be astonished that London numbers among her theatrical managers not only great speculators, but absolute illiterates. The state holds aloof from these matters ; theatres and concert-halls are not subsidised by the state and only exceptionally by the municipalities. As hardly any German theatre could exist without subsidies, sometimes running into high figures, it is pretty obvious how much better provided the German theatres and concert-halls are than the English as regards initial finance. When these things are taken into consideration, a great deal of the criticism levelled at the London stage falls to the ground. The London standard, from the point of view of the selection of plays, is not extraordinarily bad, whereas the presentation is on the whole very good.

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"OLIVER TWIST" IN THE FACTORY YARD

The London theatres and the majority of English professional theatres, the commercial undertakings, are no real indication of the theatrical taste and sentiment of the English people. London comprises a quarter of England's population, and in many ways it stands for England. But the metropolis is much more a conglomeration of the excrescences of so-called civilisation, the product of an industrial era, than a real centre of English culture. At the same time London is the big shop-window which attracts all the buyers and sellers of the world and tries to satisfy them: the population that flocks to London is rather the scum than the cream of real culture. The artistic standard of many of the provincial theatres is infinitely higher than the London average, where the really good is often stifled by mere quantity. The more we penetrate into the more intimate parts of the country the greater is often the enthusiasm for real art and culture. As with sport, professionalism, important as its services are, is not the only thing that counts; it is typical neither of English character nor of general development. As in sport, so in the theatre, it is the play of the people, individual play, which is the real thing. Every one knows that there are hundreds of thousands, nay, millions of people, who play games in England, but even in England itself it is not known that the tale of members of dramatic and operatic societies runs into six figures and that their public must number over a million. They were in existence of course before the war, but it is only in the post-war

years that the movement has, in a quiet way, become rooted in the people. This, with the revival of music, may be regarded as the most interesting and hopeful sign of culture in present-day England. In this way a spontaneous growth corresponding to the nation's needs has grown up in a few years. It embraces the noblest traditions of culture and art in the country and promises to form a counterpoise to the exaggerated materialism of recent decades. The game-sense, the play-attitude, of the English people, is here at work on the development of a culture which is both important and valuable. The genuineness of the English movement, which has parallel developments in other countries, can be gauged by the fact that artistic seriousness and self-effacement increase the further we leave London behind us ; no small part of the movement belongs to the English villages and the industrial centres of the North. It has become clearly manifest that the lower middle and the working classes are most amenable to the simple and uncorrupted kind of art which we are now considering. It would rather open people's eyes if just those classes of the community who have been regarded, apart from the needs of industrialism, as the least worth bothering about, should prove to be the most fertile soil for this new movement. It is a question of recovering an indigenous national culture which, after its efflorescence in the seventeenth century, gradually faded away owing to strangulation by other national and economic growths.

Nothing possesses permanent value for the Englishman unless it is grown and rooted in his own soil. English drama began with the folk play, a representation embracing in a primitive and elementary fashion certain simple principles of human life ; it might be sacred ritual, the idea of growth and decay, winter death and spring's re-birth, just as according to Gilbert Murray's view Greek tragedy arose out of a ritual dance pertaining to the cult of Dionysus, signifying death and re-awakening. Garbed in primitive costume, legendary national heroes and their satellites performed sword dances of symbolic and mystic significance. All this was of purely popular origin. The religious plays of later date were due to foreign influence. But during this whole period it was the people, the people of the villages and towns, which comprised both players and public. Although the performances were of little significance from the point of view of artistic drama, they spread throughout the length and breadth of the country and created an unbroken tradition until towards the end of the sixteenth century. It was at this time that professional bands of strolling players took the field in increasing numbers while at the same time Puritanism began its attacks, first on plays that smacked of catholicism and then on the theatre itself. The conception of tragi-comedy which appears to have been first introduced into England through the medium of the religious plays is the dominant note on the English stage to-day. And even now the English audience, as a relic of those

old days, likes to be drawn into the action by means of topical jests and personal references, a tendency prevalent in the music halls until quite recently, and by no means a thing of the past. The imported religious plays were nothing if not topical, a fact which effectively enhanced the close union of the stage with the life of the people.

The tradition which arose in this way was responsible for the fact that the drama, even in the new guise and with the new aims imparted to it by the erection of theatres and the introduction of professionalism, remained popular, a thing of the people. This was the atmosphere in which Shakespeare lived, and he was both actor and playwright. Those were the days in which English art produced her most spacious works. They were products both of plebeian feeling and the richer life of chivalry, but at the same time transcended both. At that time the country was flooded by a dramatic wave, the like of which was never seen in our era. Shakespeare, if the greatest, was only one out of hundreds. Every self-respecting Englishman wrote plays or at least poems. "The English of that period," says George Brandes, "were born dramatists, just as the Greeks were born sculptors and the degenerate moderns are born journalists." The time was full of eruptive and dramatic force, *joie de vivre*, violent life and death; it was a time whose natural artistic expression was essentially the drama. Shakespeare gave artistic expression to this life, but at the same time he held up to the common people a mirror of their daily existence and mingled

tragedy with the downright directness of the period. But what pleased the people so much were not the scenes of broad comedy nor yet the exuberance of action ; the truth was that England had then reached a pitch to which she is now returning to-day and will always be capable of reaching : the vindication of her true instinct for the drama, for holding the mirror up to nature. There was only one short period during which the theatre lost its popularity and this was significantly enough the last decade of the seventeenth century. It was then that the theatre became the plaything of decadent chivalry, of courtiers and their sycophants. The next step was taken by the growing middle-class townfolk. In the nineteenth century the taste was for melodrama and musical comedy, but the Shakespearean tradition was not lost. The movement was associated with Covent Garden, Drury Lane and other names which still live up to their reputation. "The play of ideas," Ibsen and Shaw and their like, brought grist to the mill. But an unfortunate aspect of this period was the decay of the classical repertory theatre. Theatres became commercialised and drama gave place to musical comedy ; the Palace of Varieties and cinema took their place. Thus began the crisis in the throes of which England finds herself at the present day. It was originally and in the main a financial crisis rather than a direct denial of good taste. But a new public found its way into the seats—the population of the large towns of yesterday and to-day. Plays were written and acted for them just as

Northcliffe wrote and printed his newspapers for the same people.

The harm then done is beginning to be in some measure repaired by the reawakening of the play instinct in the people, a phenomenon to which we are bearing witness to-day. The professional theatres have on the whole failed as national institutions and as exponents of the splendid old tradition. The unity between stage and life was lost, albeit that unity only led to real creative power at one period, and that a relatively short one. The musical comedy of to-day, originating mainly in America, sufficiently satisfies the taste of a great part of the town population, and the more it is suggested to them that this is the kind of thing they want, the better they will like it. But England's experiences have proved that the people have remained thoroughly receptive to serious dramatic art. One feels that the high traditions remain alive despite all backsliding and all the efforts of the commercial theatre to lead people astray. Their taste and natural artistic sense rises in any case above the stuff which commercial managers, with the friendly assistance of the press, insist on foisting upon them. Hence, the pivot of the English stage to-day, from an artistic point of view, is not the average professional theatre, but a stalwart little group of such theatres, and in addition the astonishing number of private undertakings. The latter, whether in the shape of professional theatres without commercial aims, or as amateur theatres, pursue throughout the country their silent efforts, which are all the more valuable

from the point of view of culture for the very reason of their silence. All that the majority of London theatres have to offer, even those with historical names, is mainly international banality, froth, the exudations of decadence ; a perfumed mixture of dance, song and comedy, only rendered tolerable by the talent displayed in the production. Entertainment, insipid amusement, but devoid of any artistic quality. Bookings are the only object. The other kind, however, is a bit of real old England, England come into her own again.



THE REVOLT OF THE AMATEUR

IF you read the London papers you will find that of some three dozen theatres there are only about three which offer any variation from "the biggest thrill in London" or a "delight" or some fashionable triviality "to amuse London." The attempts to create a national opera with English singers are not much more encouraging, and Covent Garden still bears witness to the triumph of foreigners. The typical London commercial theatre only occasionally makes a concession to serious dramatic art and seems to regard it as a duty done if it occasionally puts on Shakespeare in addition to Shaw and Galsworthy. On such occasions the result from an artistic point of view is a great success, for the London custom of getting together a cast specially for the play to be performed ensures a very careful selection. Sybil Thorndike or Henry Ainley are always ready to take up tasks of this nature. But such pieces are not in the West End taste. For this reason continual experimenting takes place in the suburbs, where rents are lower ; and it is often possible to transfer to the West End a play from say Barnes, where Kommissariewsky put on his excellent and artistic Russian dramas. The reason for the transfer is that only in the West End successful commercial results can be obtained.

Experiments also take place in the West End and for this purpose several dramatic societies have come into existence. One of the latest recruits to the movement is the Forum Theatre Guild which has leased the Royalty Theatre in order to produce modern plays of literary value through professional actors. There are also avowedly experimental theatres like the Gate Theatre, recently closed, which rendered considerable services to literature, or the Arts Theatre Club. But all this movement takes place within a relatively narrow circle, and it will be a long time before it makes its influence felt in the West End theatre. The class of people who flock to the latter do not readily rise to an artistic bait. The Everyman Theatre at Hampstead, the artistic work of which is of a high order, cannot be said to be really popular. This modest, even inadequate building, with its primitive stage and even more primitive decorations, attracts rather a small intellectual circle than a class typifying the dramatic interest of the English people. For these reasons "The Old Vic" is quite a unique product for London, for it is the only theatre in this great cosmopolitan city in which works of high artistic value are continually put on according to a fixed repertory programme by a permanent salaried troupe. Moreover, the more select the fare, the more pleased are the public occupying the 1700 seats or so in the auditorium. The fact that this theatre is on the south of the river and lies not in the West End but in a very poor district indicates the real truth of the matter ; there is a

much stronger dramatic demand, a much greater instinct for real art, in South and East London and among the middle and lower classes to-day, than in the neighbourhood of Piccadilly. Here the tone is set by the snobs, decadents, *blasé* rich, city-clerks who have enough spare cash to pay for their seats, together with a sprinkling of foreigners and country-cousins up for enjoyment. The Old Vic has by its steadfastness, the excellence of its presentation and the cheapness of its prices, accomplished what no other London theatre of modern times has been able to do, to establish in an extremely poor district a clientèle with a real and enduring appreciation of its leadership and its artistic aims, whether in the field of opera or Shakespearean tradition. The greatest attractions are the operas, mainly Mozart, Verdi or Wagner, alternating with plays ; but Shakespeare, first put on in 1914, is to-day at least as popular. When Hamlet was first performed at the Old Vic the bookings amounted to five pounds ; to-day, after little more than ten years, the house on a Hamlet night is almost sold out. The management is careful that those for whose sake the work was undertaken have a first claim to accommodation ; this applies to all friends of the Old Vic, artisans, manual workers and shop-assistants ; the management is by no means keen on the rich. A place in the gallery costs fivepence and most seats are under two shillings despite the rise in cost of living due to the war. Such a state of things is only possible in present-day London if the theatre's main object is not

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STRIKE DAYS IN A MINING VILLAGE

profit but art for art's sake, and if the burden of Piccadilly rents is removed.

Barring the Old Vic, few institutions have been able to rise above the capitalist curse which has had such detrimental effect upon the English professional theatre. Among them the more prominent are the Lena Ashwell Players, the Arts League of Service, in addition to a number of provincial theatres outside London. The first, originating in a company which visited the front during the war, took the inadequate little Century Theatre in Notting Hill and at the same time made many tours in the suburbs. In one of their first years they performed 88 different pieces including Shakespeare, Shaw, Sheridan, Galsworthy, and within six months drew over a hundred thousand spectators. The Arts League of Service is a union of professional actors who tour the towns and villages of the provinces with a very extensive repertoire. They began their work since the war and in six years this travelling company visited over 600 places in all parts of the country.

The real home of the new theatrical movement is in the provinces, and Yorkshire leads the way. There the commercial theatres which dominate London lose their grip. At the same time the whole tradition of the professional theatre goes by the board and, what is of the greatest importance, the standard of the plays improves proportionately. Not that London enterprise does not graze freely in the provincial paddocks ; you meet all the typical London favourites in the larger provincial towns,

after they have come off at the West End. But a serious blow has been struck, with very good results, to commercialism and its pitiful manifestations owing to the efforts of various Play-goers' Societies, which have taken over the commercial and artistic leadership, setting out with the idea of not working for financial results. The effect is that the choice of plays is not subordinated to business speculation, while all the advantages of professionalism are retained. The movement is no less a protest against the commercialised theatre than an act of self-help. This further step towards the development of the dramatic movement throughout the country is thus seen to arise from practical and especially financial necessity: the public in fact began to run their own theatres. The most outstanding examples of a combination of methods, where a Playgoers' Society manages the theatre and at the same time finds the artistes, are the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, the Leeds Art Theatre, and the Liverpool Playhouse. The first theatre of this kind arose in Manchester; people wanted to see plays again that could interest reasonable beings without being reduced to the level of the London thriller. It was a rebellion of healthy instinct. Nature's revolt against the tyranny over the intellect opened the way to a great popular movement. Experts assert that to-day, in Lancashire for instance, no less than sixty-five per cent. of the best representations are amateur performances.

In the course of a few years dramatic societies were formed here and there throughout the whole

country and even in the small villages. It was a purely spontaneous growth. People heard about these things and enthusiasm was born. Most of these events happened in the bare ten years since the war and already the number of societies runs into the thousands. A large number, especially many of the three hundred or more in London, have to be wiped off the slate to begin with as practically worthless, for unfortunately society and her grisly sycophants have laid their clammy hands upon them. The main function of these people is to try the West End favourites at their own homes and to dress themselves up becomingly. The new movement is not free from its own particular form of snobbishness, but this does not materially retard progress. It has already penetrated far into the lower layers of the population and mainly into the lowest ; there its effects are most marked.

In regard to the amateur theatre also the provinces are far ahead of London. The London suburbs, where the dramatic and operatic societies have reached a high pitch of development, can offer good and tasteful performances. But in many cases the pride of artistry does not seem to be nearly so strong as the desire for entertainment and social pleasure, while in the provinces it may be said with much more truth that the play is the thing. This is at any rate the impression gained from one of the best authorities in a very instructive report emanating from the Board of Education. In Lancashire or Yorkshire the audience attracted to the plays appears to embrace a far wider public

than is the case elsewhere. In fact, in the northern counties the chief supporters of the amateur theatrical movement are drawn from the same class as the thousands who flock to see football matches. The artisans of the north figure largely both as actors, and in the management of these theatres. Huddersfield is the name of a small and ugly industrial town. The name is at any rate familiar to sportsmen from the fact that one of the best English football teams comes from it. But who ever heard of the Huddersfield Thespians ? This is the name of one of these young societies whose object is the study of dramatic literature and the production of works which would otherwise never be seen in the town. The society consists of over 200 active members who belong to every class—doctors, school-teachers, officials, shopkeepers, and very often artisans. They do everything : they read plays, select and produce them ; they prepare the stage with their own hands, look after all its technical details, design and make the costumes and wigs, and in addition appear very creditably on the stage. And all this after a hard day's work. Not far from Huddersfield is Leeds, the textile city. To the insight of a clergyman and a manufacturer, combined with their knowledge of human nature, is due the foundation in that town of a great amateur association of workers, which after the war developed into the Leeds Industrial Theatre, one of the most characteristic products of the movement. Many artisans from the numerous factories assisted in the work. A large number of

them could hardly read, but their zeal for the drama was unbounded. They produced Ibsen, Maeterlinck, Strindberg, Shaw, and of course Shakespeare. The undertaking got into financial difficulties, but a contributing cause was that the artisan-players in their zeal over-estimated the taste of the artisan-public. The Leeds Civic Theatre, founded in 1925, is attempting to gather up the threads, also on an amateur basis. The Bradford Industrial Theatre, in which the amateur companies of many factories co-operated under the leadership of an experienced manager, imitated the example of Leeds. But in this case the movement did not arise spontaneously from the workers, but through the initiative of the Town Council, which placed a hall at the association's disposal, and afforded other assistance. A vigorous young amateur society has ensured itself a permanent home in the Maddermarket Theatre in Norwich. This is in contrast to the usual custom of hiring a hall or playing in the open air in the summer season. This body gives a regular programme on a stage which closely follows the Elizabethan tradition. So thoroughly has it established itself that it possesses a regular paying clientèle of several hundred who never miss a first night. The ideal of the "Little Theatre" is here entirely fulfilled. A like advantage of a permanent home is enjoyed by movements like the Citizen House at Bath, and a whole series of Settlements. The Citizen House, founded in 1913, provides the lower classes, on the model of the settlements, with a social

centre, and educational facilities of all sorts for young people. A proper miniature theatre with all accessories, and providing seating accommodation for 250 people, was built as part of the institution. In this as in similar cases the drama plays a regulated part in the comprehensive scheme of welfare work which goes by the rather misleading name of adult education. This institute, which owes its foundation to a group of women, is a complete, almost too complete, playhouse in the fullest sense of the word, and an incomparable training-ground for the social spirit.

These examples are only taken here and there as significant of the whole complex of play-organisation, which has grown up in England during the last decade. Of recent years units have banded themselves together in great leagues, the principal being the British Drama League and the Village Drama Society, without the slightest detriment to their individuality and independence. The individual associations only look to the parent institution for support and advice when they are in need of it. The British Drama League possesses a valuable technical library and publishes the monthly magazine, *Drama*, which embraces the whole movement. The important aspect of the case, however, is the formation of these numerous minor centres in all parts of the country. They are small, almost insignificant, social centres, through whose individual impulse dramatic art and the artistic sense are fostered. One of the best dramatic performances given is said to have been the

production of *Everyman* by an amateur troupe of a little mining village in Lancashire. Such a tendency is, of course, seized on by schools and education generally, and the growth of the dramatic spirit in schools of every kind, the most games-ridden public schools as well as the settlement and technical continuation schools, is one of the most commendable features of the whole movement. Dramatic art with all its appurtenances, *pari passu* with the play-attitude, is developing at a remarkable rate in English education. The movement approaches the drama not from its literary nor yet from its intellectual side, but through humanity, nature and instinct. It is to be regretted that the universities have stressed too much the philological and literary aspects ; such an attitude of necessity narrows the circle of interest. Nevertheless, students' dramatic societies have been formed outside the ordinary curriculum of the university. These aim at welding together dramatic art and national life into one embracing whole ; and this is really the crux of the movement.



EURIPIDES IN THE VILLAGE

NOWHERE has the new movement met with more enthusiasm than in some hundreds of English villages which take an active part therein. There the necessity was greatest, the craving most intense. England has no peasants or peasant-culture in our sense of the word. There are labourers, and farmers who may be tenants or small landowners. The English economic system is in a state of transition, but no peasants nor peasant-culture will emerge from it. The tenant-farmers whose families have lived for generations on their lands as lessees of the great landlords have carried on the tradition of the countryside with its primeval customs, fêtes and songs ; in the same way the treasures of age-old culture have been preserved in the huts of fishermen and the shielings of the Highland spinsters. It is quite otherwise with the modern industrial villages, especially in the mining districts, which are no older than the operations which called them into being. Their inhabitants often enough live amid all the horrors of lower-class suburbs, and have little share in the enchanting beauty of the country village ; they know nothing of the peace and fullness of these country idylls, slumbering in a haze of blossom beneath primeval trees. The

industrial villages pant for life, and the beauty-sleep of the country village is a thing of the past.

The whole atmosphere is illusive, and it is difficult to do more than hint at vague tendencies ; but elementary education which only awakes cravings without stimulating the imagination, and the elimination of distance by motor-cycle, car, wireless, and newspapers, have disturbed the peaceful dream even of the quietest rustic village. Where is the "country" to-day ? A few miles outside London there are still houses and villages which carry us back centuries, but appearances are deceptive ; only the architecture and externals are old. And the same thing may happen hundreds of miles away from the capital. We think we are in the presence of hoary antiquity, but at that moment a man steps out of the house equipped with pipe, cap and Oxford trousers, and gets into his car ; meanwhile from the enchanted cottage with its thatched roof, familiar sounds emerge. The wizard sits before the microphone of the British Broadcasting Corporation.

To-day the country village is to a great extent a mixture of tradition and the latest doubts and aspirations. Just as the artisan often ceases as a result of his education to love his work without having the capacity to enter the intellectual arena, in the same manner the villager feels in many ways uprooted without knowing where the thirsty fibres can find fresh nourishment. He tries the town, and the so-called culture of the great cities, which in the primitive surroundings of the provinces seems

stupider than ever. After all, heaps of people seem to enjoy these things, or at least to make their living out of them ; and it seems a jolly kind of business, this carnival of the town. Others are definitely hostile ; the country is nature, they themselves are natural men ; how could it be otherwise than that they should be disgusted ? At the present time it is the latter, the class of men belonging to the most varied ranks and professions of the country towns and villages, who are attracted to the new movement. Here they sense nature, here art presents itself to them in a form they can understand ; they find it indigenous and suited to their mental and æsthetic outlook : unpretentious, popular play-acting. Wandering troupes and extensive organisations like the Village Drama Society, which in a short time was able to number 150 subsidiaries, and established direct touch with thousands of villages, bore the torch through the countryside. The press on the whole troubled little about the movement—which was perhaps all to the good.

Very often all that was required was a man with theatrical instinct or a woman of enthusiasm to bring into existence a village operatic society, and this would entertain the whole neighbourhood with its productions. Sometimes their efforts are quite primitive on the formal side, but often a very high level is reached by the village theatre in localities, for instance, where the conditions are specially favourable, or where the neighbourhood possesses experts who are willing to lend a hand.

In such cases art and talent, both national and local, are fostered in a degree which leaves nothing to be desired. Local history is seldom neglected in these village communities. While some devote themselves to well-known dramatic works, others at a more elementary stage take up a line which has quite recently been followed in many villages and small towns : they confine themselves to the reproduction of historical scenes, and put on pageants, masques in other words, which have recently revived their popularity in England. These are useful not only for recruiting purposes, but, as a collection is made, or entrance-money charged, funds are raised for useful services. One of the most interesting examples is afforded by the little town of Castleford in the colliery district of Yorkshire. Here an enthusiastic schoolmaster and his friends during the miners' strike of 1921 produced a series of historical pageants, in which not only hundreds of the strikers co-operated, but also their wives, and even the Conservative Club of the little town. The success was so great that the pageants had to be repeated in the surrounding district, with the result that the pageant play and community drama have taken such a firm hold as to be permanent institutions. The process was repeated in the great strike of 1926. This little grain of seed bore fruit throughout the whole of Yorkshire. Mr. Dawes, the organiser of the Castleford pageant, gives us his receipt in the following words : " Take a handful of people who are inclined to talk about Merrie England, a few

schoolmasters, a parson or two, a lot of children, and some one who is fool enough to be secretary, and you have a good start. Then seize every opportunity to bring in a bit of money for a rainy day, and next get together your committee. In doing so don't forget the Adult Schools, the Rotary Clubs, the churches and chapels, nor any thing of that kind. And there you are ! " So that is how a Community Theatre is made.

In another village, Shoreham, they went about it in another way. When a new Public Hall was built in the village, a few interested people conceived the idea of establishing a village dramatic society. They had the good fortune to interest Lord Dunsany, the well-known writer, and the Shoreham Village Players, mostly local shopkeepers and workmen, became in a short time some of the keenest and most enthusiastic amateur players. The Hardy Players in Dorchester belong to another category. Some twenty years or so ago they began to produce Thomas Hardy's Wessex novels in dramatised form. This troupe is the most outstanding example of the dramatic movement which devotes itself to the culture and history of its own district. Again the Glastonbury festivals take a leading place among the productions of popular lore, early English miracle plays, and Elizabethan madrigals in musical and dramatic form.

The combination of dramatic art with popular tradition, local and otherwise, might give rise to the idea that the crux of the movement lay in the stimulation of patriotic and local feeling, as may

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"HIPPOLYTUS" IN THE VILLAGE BARN

indeed happen. Moreover, it might be imagined that the enthusiasm for Shakespeare might be much less in certain cases if Shakespeare had not been born in the English countryside. Such misconceptions readily fall to the ground when it is realised how important the representation of Greek tragedy has become in several amateur theatres. A striking example in this connection is West Hoathly, a village in Sussex. There the Stoneland Players have for years produced plays like *Hippolytus*, *Iphigenia*, *Ædipus*, and others, with great success. The plays were studied by Mrs. King and her family, and played in a barn which was arranged in a manner as tasteful as it was novel. At first, only the students of a University Extension Course took part in the representations, but the performances were such an attraction that they became an integral part of the life of the village. About sixty of the inhabitants, ranging from three to seventy-four years of age, appear on the stage, and the numerous performances which take place every year sometimes attract no less than three hundred spectators. The preparations fill the villagers for months previously with dramatic enthusiasm, and this suffers no abatement in the summer, when boys and men play cricket in their spare time, or have to work in their gardens. Winter is the village's dramatic "season," and then, in addition to the Greeks, Shakespeare and the moderns come in for their share of study.

No one will believe that in an English village of to-day Greek tragedy is more popular than a

modern musical play, if there is an opportunity for choice ; but that the former exists as a regular institution of English village life, and that in these days it is able to compete successfully with the most up-to-date favourites is at least gratifying. Those who make a study of these matters go so far as to maintain that the villagers very often find that Greek tragedies, thanks to Gilbert Murray's excellent translations, are more easily understood and enjoyed than even Shakespeare's dramas. These antique plays with their broad and enduring human undercurrent, their dominant fate-motif, their magic rhythm, seem to strike a responsive chord in the hearts of people who know little of the Attic culture of the public schools. Of course, this does not mean that you have only to put on a Greek tragedy in the village to ensure a commercial success. What goes in one village may be a failure in the next. But this fact clearly emerges : it requires no broad jokes, no humour of the variety stage, no Falstaffian scenes, still less the frivolity of the great cities, to grip the minds of large sections of the English people, to make art an experience, and to awake their dramatic interest. And these are the classes whom the highbrow entirely leaves out of account when he piques himself on his intellectualism. But if you want to attract these people you must give them something plain and simple, and above all it must have outstanding artistic merit. The idea that silly jokes are sufficient is as absurd as an attempt to build up national art on the crazy scaffold of the modern stage is

hopeless. The people of the English towns and villages too are ready ; they are only waiting for a poet to express what they feel. The average modern production is written down to the level of the people who can afford to pay fancy prices for their seats, or else hovers coldly aloof in the clouds, instead of speaking forth what nature has laid in the hearts of men. And the strange thing is that many Englishmen used to say it was the people's fault.



THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NEW MOVEMENT

How is it that all this multitude of people are borne along the self-same current? Certainly in accordance with no plan, nor in any artificial manner. With very few exceptions the movement is entirely spontaneous in its origin. Even those who have most insight into these matters are in a perpetual state of astonishment at the craving they find among the people: a hunger for artistic, creative activity. The impulse to play, expression of which seemed for generations to be confined to sport and games, the Englishman's play-attitude, has woken to action after a period of cultural desolation, and is now in perfect harmony with English character. The love of romance and tradition is here satisfied to the full: the craving for dressing-up, posturing, mimicry, rhythm in speech and action, the delight in every kind of technique, find their fulfilment. Stage decoration, production, good taste, pride of Shakespearean ancestry, in short, all the emotions and excitements associated with play-acting and its preparations, all contribute to the satisfaction of a people who have dramatic tradition in their blood. The whole movement constitutes a powerful natural reaction

against the vapidness of contemporary production, and the artistic barrenness and travesties which are the natural consequences of the commercialisation of art. That village and country-town should take a leading part in the movement is only a sign of the revolution now afoot in English life, of whose effects we are the witnesses. The products of modern civilisation, exemplified by cinema, wireless, and newspaper, have reached the people of the countryside just at the moment when the puritanical cloak had been ruthlessly cast aside by the villages. After a brief hesitation a large proportion of the populace rejects these fruits of culture offered by enterprising business-managers, and clamours to do something better on his own account. Nevertheless, it is a matter more of dramatic feeling and desire, rather than of real power. It goes without saying that in many, very many cases, the zeal of these amateur players outruns the quality of their performance. It is, moreover, inevitable that misunderstandings and abuses are all too frequent, but all this is of no great account. Quality is often enough only a question of time and patience, of education and example. The tendency itself is the important matter, coupled with genuineness of feeling; and facts bear evidence to both. If one talks with those who have made a special study of the movement, if one studies examples in different localities, or reads the voluminous reports of the Board of Education on the subject, no doubt remains as to the earnestness behind the whole revival. Over

and over again one hears it asserted that the people have found in the movement a means of natural self-expression. But to achieve this object, drama, and even art, must remain in the province of nature, be part and parcel of direct natural life, intertwined however with popular and even topical strands. According to the *Encyclopædia Britannica* there is no such thing as literary drama. At any rate, in Shakespeare's day drama was not considered to belong to literature. It was in fact a slice of life, and this fact renders possible an intimate association between the stage and the people, and the poet's position in the world is that of a human fellow-sufferer and an observing god.

To reinstate the proper relation between drama and popular life is also the aim of the British Drama League, and all who strive to further the new movement. Humour and irony are among the most powerful agents employed by English artistic instinct to ensure unity of stage and people in a sphere where intellectual taste has been lost to art. But however intentionally Shakespeare himself may have played the fool—or the makers of the ecclesiastical plays before him—his humour and irony were only used as a foil for setting off with greater distinctness ideas, characters, and real drama, against the negative background of comedy which was the life of his day. Every healthy people needs to laugh, but the English love their Shakespeare no less for his tears. All the feeling, sentimentality, romance, pain, anxiety, hidden behind their apparent stolidity, cry out for

expression. It is because in past generations the rigidity, constraint, and artificiality of external life checked the craving of the personality for a free outlet, that the present repression is so intense. Often enough the church, instead of penetrating the casing of the soul, only made it more impervious. Sport, on the other hand, while allowing one temporarily to forget one's mental tension, affords but an inadequate release from it. But actual artistic experience means nothing less than self-surrender. An Englishman, who has been a workman all his life, who lives in a workman's dwelling in Yorkshire, and who was closely associated with the fortunes of the Leeds Industrial Theatre, makes the following classic contribution from his experiences : " I believe that the most valuable result of the work of the Industrial Theatre was that it allowed, nay demanded, that the work-people should break their shells, and come out of themselves." For, as one of his fellow-workmen said to him, " It's no use trying to play the part of another unless you try to feel what he feels." And, after a performance of *The Merchant of Venice*, one of these artisan-players exclaimed, " Eh, I've been miles away from myself to-night, and I feel pounds lighter for it."

Sympathy, understanding of others, and release, a freeing of the soul, these are the things which make the dramatic play-attitude of the people so valuable. And it is not only a release from humanity's needs and cares ; the dramas gain the individual for the community, for the common

weal. The people's theatre is above all a co-operative form of expression ; and in this respect its value, as with sport, lies in team work. Individual brilliance is not required. How typical all this is of English life ! Individual character must be made as complete as possible, but the highest aspiration of England's individual freedom is voluntary self-sacrifice, co-ordination, in fact everything comprised in the word "service." For this reason it is a rule in many amateur theatres not to publish the names of the actors, and to keep changing the parts ; the king of to-day may have to content himself with the servant's part to-morrow. The whole movement is eminently democratic in the best sense of the word. The mixing of the various social classes in a single company has already been referred to. This must of necessity lead to the lowering of social barriers, and to a better mutual understanding. The various industrial theatres have proved that co-operation between master and man is both healthy and useful. Circumstances have arisen which have their exact parallels in sport and its organisation. In the domain of sport there are countless clubs which correspond to the individual groups of workers on the horizontal plane, and others whose division run vertically according to the individual businesses ; a tendency towards similar groupings is observable in the whole of the Little Theatre movement. But in both cases this is incidental, and the only thing of real importance is the unity of interests, the community of feeling, and the consciousness

of all pulling together in the same boat. In both cases we see competition and contests of all kinds, both national and international. As regards the latter, one has particularly to remember America, where the Little Theatre movement, as is well known, plays a great part. The full significance of the movement will only be realised if these social tendencies, and the importance of team-work are taken into account. This conception is eminently English in its combination of conscious and unconscious elements in the construction of the social fabric. Just as English sport is not purely selfish, nor on the other hand mere instinctive realisation of natural impulse, so too the English people do not regard art as a thing in itself. They do not value it for its intrinsic merits. English art is inseparably bound up with English reality.

Superficially it might be suspected that this artistic renaissance is really all humbug, snobbery of the masses, and at best self-deception, despite everything that has been said of the natural play-attitude of the English, their particular conception of life, and all their inherited dramatic tradition. For this reason it is advisable to reiterate a few of the facts. Not only at the Old Vic, but throughout the whole country, the success achieved appears to be proportionate to the genuineness and greatness, the artistic merit of the piece played. All who are associated with these matters affirm that the mere announcement in a country town that a Shakespeare play is to be given is sufficient to fill the hall. In

sharp contrast to the methods of the commercial theatre, these community undertakings do not make it their aim to descend to the common level of popular taste, but are able to set themselves a high standard. The public willingly rises to the occasion, even where, as in the poorer quarters of the great cities, some time is required to prepare the ground. If any one's ears are full of ragtime they can only gradually be accustomed to Beethoven or Bach, and those who are used to ghastly musical comedies will feel a certain amount of suspicion, both towards themselves and others, before turning to the classics either past or present. Here is a list collected by a committee of the Board of Education, which shows the type of performances making up the regular repertoire of the better class of amateur companies :—

1. Greek plays.
2. Shakespeare's plays.
3. Sheridan.
4. Revival of old plays, and experiments in new dramatic forms, scenery and stagecraft.
5. Plays of ideas (viz., Ibsen, Shaw and the like).
6. Imaginative plays and contemporary poetic works of English and Irish dramatists.
7. Pieces in the nature of resuscitation of local traditions, customs, and dialect.
8. Religious pieces.
9. Plays portraying the ideals and aims of other nations.

SIGNIFICANCE OF NEW MOVEMENT 167

10. Pieces showing an interest in national and local history, and the development of social conditions.

We have in addition all those things which are outside the sphere of strictly dramatic companies, such as music, opera, operetta, dancing, and the like, but the programme often includes both drama and music.



THE MUSICAL REVIVAL

RHYTHM

ENGLISH life is governed by a strict "time," and the Englishman moves through it to the beat of a metronome. Who invented time-notation? Perhaps the historians of music can tell us. It is left for us to accept the crotchets of the adagio, the pulsing quavers of the rondo, or the heavy semi-breves of the grave. Now it is a military band, now a statesman wields the baton, now a bishop or a stockbroker. Our "time" is prescribed by tradition, education, law, and custom. No people is more attentive to the beat than the English; the bandmasters of no other nation hear so clearly within their own breasts the tick of the metronome. But again what is this time? Nothing but a regulator which forces us musicians to play in harmony. Our national band wants a conductor, not an umpire, but the metronome is fundamentally nothing but a means of expression for the categorical imperative, which is ever the same, whether in a football match, in civic life, or wherever people work or play together. Keep time—that is fair play. The strange conventions of English life are a means to freedom, freedom for others. Freedom and fairness do not give each musician the right to play his own time and tune. Yet time is not an end in itself. Within the little

black bars flows the rhythm. Time merely controls the flow of the music as the weir regulates the stream. It is the stream itself, the rhythm, which we love. And such rhythm the English possess. The time is obvious—one has only to watch the conductor's baton—but the rhythm has to be *felt*. It is because of those who can't feel it, that people find it so difficult to live harmoniously together and to understand one another.

Of course there are inartistic people among the English of to-day, people entirely wrapped up in materialism, sport or business ; but the average Englishman has rhythm, and rhythm is an artistic quality. Whoever has a flair for these things, and enough courage to cut clear of preconceived ideas, can easily satisfy himself on this point after a very short time. The English often appear slower than they really are. A rhythmical stream flows through the whole of English life. The rhythm is not German, French, Italian or Slavonic : it is purely English. It may be less pronounced than the German, and perhaps to the foreigner not always attractive. It may often be difficult to recognise, for it does not appear on the surface, and not every Englishman has it. But it is there all the same. You can begin with quite small things, such as the average hand-writing. An English cook writes a bolder, clearer, and more virile hand than the average housewife in many other countries. Admitted that English writing is, so to speak, current coin, standardised, and perhaps to this extent less conclusive as an indication of character ;

but it has style, fluency, and rhythm. Possibly the whole of the happy character of this people's life could be analysed in the same manner. But it is preferable to confine the discussion to a less contentious atmosphere, that of artistic performance. It is quite obvious that the English regard rhythm as of the utmost importance in poetic and dramatic art. Their demand for rhythm in music is, at the moment, even more insistent than is the case in Germany. At the present day melody is not nearly so important to them as rhythm, and this may be a reaction against an earlier monotony and pedantic observance of time. It is nevertheless a fact, despite the romantic and sentimental nature of the people. Such at present is the musical tendency in more serious circles. They aim expressionistically at broad lines and rhythmic structure, without experiencing the same joy in, or the same understanding for, beauty of detail. English criticism to-day, by insisting primarily on rhythm, helps materially to ensure a fairly high musical average. But the greatest heights are seldom reached, for this is only possible when impressionism and expressionism are combined. Perhaps the tendency is a counterblast to the sentimentality of the average Englishman which threatened to carry impressionism beyond the limits of good taste. The new tendency is the more remarkable because no one will readily ascribe excess of intellectuality to English artistic activities. English artists, teachers and critics seem to work quite consciously against sentimentality. The result is that English

performance is often cold, but nevertheless it does not leave much to be desired in architectonics and rhythm.

It is the rhythm which fascinates. Any one who has heard an isolated performance on the bagpipes has not the faintest idea of what the Scottish piper can do. If bagpipes are massed in a band the strong rhythmic flow has a most powerful effect, and this is only softened by the blending of tone and chords, and the apparent repetition of themes. British ear and character alike react very forcibly to these rhythmic waves, and we meet this characteristic strongly developed in Scottish music generally. England has borrowed much of her rhythm from Scottish sources, and Scottish tradition has had a considerable effect on recent composition. The effect is often similar to that of syncopated negro music. It hypnotises the senses, and hammers mercilessly on the spot first struck by the opening chord. The object may be merely to relax the limbs and invite them to continuous dancing or, on the other hand, it may be aimless jollity or deep dejection. It is only its primitive greatness which has preserved folk-music throughout the centuries. Its significance is allurements, dancing. The mysteries of dancing well up from an unknown primitive abyss, but the simple happy measures of the folk-dance are but the shimmering ripples on the surface of a bottomless sea. They are pleasantly superficial, like most things that the English allow you to see.

Dancing gives people an opportunity of playing

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FOLK DANCING IN SCOTLAND

a harmless, friendly game with their passions. The frivolity of the modern ballroom dances, mainly introduced from abroad, stands in sharp contrast to the uncanny primitiveness of the Old English folk-dance. These dances have been revived during the last twenty years or so by the English Folk Dance Society. While their underlying motives can still be detected in their symbolism, they show no appreciable trace of emotion or excitement on the surface. The art of the people, which developed and passed on these dances almost untouched by external influence, has been successful in veneering the grosser sensual elements by unconstrained and happy charm. The English temperament has managed by education and self-respect to purify its play, and to give it very clear-cut expression ; nowhere is this more obvious than in folk-dancing. The result is lively, happy rhythm. A newer and very comprehensive school attempts by a variety of methods in play to inculcate rhythm generally and systematically into English life. While some specialise for this purpose in music and dancing, others are much more comprehensive in their efforts : they regard speech, drama, music and dancing as a single complex and the rhythm underlying all forms of play as the greatest artistic force. Schools of this kind, such as the Central School of Speech Training and Dramatic Art, and the Greenleaf Theatre, unanimously assert from their experience that the people generally have a strong sense of rhythm, and are very responsive to it. To regard dancing and drama as a unity is, of course,

not unnatural, since English history has plenty of evidence of their common origin. The forms, however, which the modern folk-dance movement has introduced in its somewhat exaggerated enthusiasm—quite comprehensible in the circumstances—are less natural. Occasionally traces are observed of social silliness. But there can be no doubt about the artistic sense underlying the propaganda of this school. Folk dancing, whether it be in England, Scotland or Wales, is a very original and unspoilt inheritance of the people, handed down from most ancient times ; a natural expression, naturally developed, of play, originating in rhythmic instinct.



MUSICAL TRADITION IN ENGLAND

It was the boast of Englishmen in Queen Elizabeth's time, not only that they possessed the greatest drama, but that England was then the home of music. He who could not write verses or assist in the performance of a madrigal, was regarded as an uneducated boor. Nor in those days was music, any more than dramatic art, a privilege of the upper classes ; delight in vocal and instrumental music, and the ability to perform it, were common to all classes of the community. Every student of the history of the art knows how high England's reputation then stood on the continent for contrapuntal music. The Carnegie Trust's collection, which has had a considerable share in the revival of English traditional culture in other matters as well as music, contains a priceless collection of old English madrigals. Similarly, popular ditties and sea chanties have become known to wider circles through the researches of Cecil Sharp and Sir Richard Terry. These madrigals and folk songs are often of surpassing beauty. The exalted religious peace, and the unrestrained gaiety of a happy people, are mingled in the music of that period with admirable artistic power. Even to-day some of the finest things to be heard in

England are the rendering of these choruses or part-songs by well trained voices in which the country is so rich. Such performances are often heard in private houses and concert-rooms. Handel had no slight justification for coming to England, and making his home there. For she possessed in those days not only two famous composers, but music was, like the drama, an integral part of English life, just as much as football is to-day. How far Puritanism was responsible for the decay which followed an efflorescence lasting for generations is much more difficult to prove than it is in the case of the drama. The consequent barrenness of life was like the effect of an east wind in a summer flower-garden. All the more easy was the invasion of foreign influences ; people ceased to take part themselves in musical performances, and listened to professional players. The result was that professional music gradually drew so far away from popular feeling that the masses came to regard it as an incomprehensible mystery. Other causes making for chaos were the increasing materialism of a population which grew more rapidly still ; finally, the consignment of music to the category of saleable and profitable commodities—its commercialisation in fact. All this hardly accounts for the fact that, for several generations since Purcell, and especially during the heyday of music in other countries, England produced not one single great composer, and that creative power has only recently revived. It would be useless to maintain, as some do, that the English character is so one-sidedly

practical and political that musical phantasy is crowded out. Such phantasy is by no means lacking in English life, any more than the Englishman is really the genial political artist one generally supposes. For the purposes of this book, which deals with mass characteristics rather than individual excellence, it is sufficient to demonstrate that in course of this evolution the bond between music as an intellectual art, and music as a natural experience of the people was broken. Moreover, it is not too much to assert that this estrangement reacted seriously on the productive power of the individual. One essential condition of future productive power is the revival of the play-spirit in music, the improvement of musical taste on the one hand, and the humanising of professionalism on the other. Such a condition may or may not be fulfilled, but it is immaterial to the question whether the English are a music-loving people or not.

Sir Thomas Beecham, one of the best known English conductors of the present day, said a short time ago that England was sinking gradually, not to a second rate musical nation as before the war, but to a tenth rate. Sir Thomas is attempting to rouse the public to a new enthusiasm with a view to founding a national opera, and therefore a little exaggeration is pardonable. London music of to-day is certainly not tenth rate. The metropolis possesses very fine orchestras, good conductors, and an astounding wealth of serious artists, while a town like Manchester has a Hallé orchestra, and a

Hamilton Harty for conductor. If any one has time he should try to extend his acquaintance beyond the old buffers and big-wigs, pompous and effete, of the bad old days. Let him get a glimpse at the work of the younger generation, and the attractive artistic life of certain musical clubs, in the neighbourhood of St. John's Wood, for instance. Let him take the trouble to visit some of the many hundred concerts given by young artists, without confining himself solely to the worst. After this he will not deny that there is a surprising amount of sound healthy grain among the chaff. Reproductive art if you like, but still art. And be it remembered that other countries to-day have no Beethoven, but only a Casals. If it be asked, is any one in England willing to listen to good music, the answer will probably be quite different from what would generally be expected.

The English love music in any shape or form, whether it be jazz-band, a gramophone, the bagpipes, a Wagner overture, folk-melodies, or comic songs. Not every London street-boy whistles, but a number do. Not every chambermaid hums a tune to herself, but you hear plenty doing it. In England fewer tenors are found in smithies or on scaffoldings than is the case in Italy, but most of them sing something or other. While every one does not wander over the meadows warbling a ditty, there are not a few who do so. The Boy Scouts are not highly trained vocalists, but they fill the whole evening with song or music of sorts, when

the English boyish reserve is thawed by the genial warmth of the camp fire around which they lie ; nor do they sing only war-songs, far from it ! The little chaps who march to church on Sunday mornings with music and banners are very hearty, and often quite good, performers. English youth plays neither guitar nor mandoline, but music, song and dance belong to their open-air life. In almost every house of the lower middle class you find a piano. This and the fact that people who can play it or the fiddle, or who can sing, are very welcome, may not be a proof of musical taste, but it shows a certain receptivity. To-day the gramophone has lost most of its horror, and in England it has found its use in education, not for fox-trots, but for teaching good and serious music, in schools for example. The performances of military bands are at least as popular as in any other country, and their standard is often very high. The Scottish bag-pipers enrich military music with effects quite unknown on the Continent.

Nevertheless, the idea that the average Englishman is not fond of music is fairly prevalent, and even observers who have lived for years in the country assert that the English are not a musical nation. Probably the layer of rubbish and nonsense was in former days much deeper than it is at present, so deep, in fact, that it was difficult to discover anything of value below the surface. It was only in the eighties and nineties that the musical revival began. To any one who takes the trouble to observe patiently, and does not confine his observation to

fashionable London, it will be obvious that a movement is afoot which must inevitably bring English music more and more into the lives of the people, just as they were steeped in it in bygone centuries. Granted that individual excellence in every sphere is of the greatest value, only time can decide to what extent the nation as a whole is affected by a broad movement such as the present. English music does not reach the standard of individual excellence of some other countries, and the general level, dragged down by American musical comedies and second-rate jazz-bands, seems also to be relatively low. But the craving for musical play is as strong as ever among the people, and recently its strength increases from year to year. It is quite possible to-day to meet a whole drawing-room full of people among whom not a single one claims to be musical, and if one does he is mistaken. All the same, the English are really music-lovers. And if it be asked whether it is a question merely of play or of fair play, one may pretty confidently answer that the musical tendency is more and more in the direction of the latter. English instinct wants something beyond mere sound ; it wants good, serious music. And this cannot be wondered at if one considers the nation's past record. But this important fact must always be remembered, the English artistic temperament is essentially naïve, unconventional, simple, and natural. Complicated or intellectual music finds no responsive chord in the English breast ; yet on the other hand Bach, Handel, or even Chopin, will

never lack appreciation in England. Intellectual exaggeration, however, is alien to the people's character.

The coolness towards opera found even among very musical people in England is obviously in the main an aversion from the stilted, unnatural forms which this genre very often, or one might say almost always, implies. It is not easy for the English to make a compromise between song and drama. To them the opera is no longer the light play which even the most serious Shakespearean drama must be if it is to meet with approval in an English theatre. Such aversion or hesitation seems most easily overcome by the imperious harmonies of Wagner's operas. Next in popular favour after Wagner comes comic opera, and to some extent the *Rosenkavalier*. Of course good opera is never cheap. To-day, however, English opera is compelled to be cheap, for its present financial position is critical. This cheapening leads to a lowering of standard, both in preparation and performance, to such an extent, that the instinctive aversion from opera as an artistic production is easily understood. Moreover, only an English opera could be truly popular. The great operas are German, Italian and French. The foreign language is itself a disadvantage. In Germany real German opera only came into existence when Mozart deserted Italian models as regards both form and language.

But all this is of far less importance than the commercial question which makes a quiet, patient,

enduring co-operation of all the conflicting interests impossible. A musician who has to be racking his brains all the time to think where he can find the next engagement—and even he has to live—can never achieve his best performance. English music, especially as regards opera and the orchestra, has not by any means had fair play. Finance and commercialisation stand in the way. The result is that England, so far as opera is concerned, is still to-day at the mercy of foreigners, and the greater the musical demand the more will this be the case. The London season, which is not only a culmination of social pleasures, but also a high-water mark of all English life, looks to Covent Garden as an essential part of her programme ; but no opera season would be possible without foreign help. For this reason a group of musical patrons, at one time headed and financed by Courtaulds of artificial silk fame, have co-operated to bring about a German-Italian-French season. It opens with German opera, which takes the leading part. It is impossible to think of the London spring season without its German opera, and it is significant of England's necessities that Bruno Walter was only able to reach his most conspicuous triumph when he was allowed to bring his whole entourage, the whole organisation built up by himself and his artists, along with him. The English are well aware that the brilliance of individual stars is not of much account, but that results depend on team work.

The financial difficulties referred to had their

MUSICAL TRADITION IN ENGLAND 185

effect upon the orchestras. Not a few, and among them the best, have had to be disbanded since the war. Good London orchestra-players are over-worked ; money and time, often sensible, self-sacrificing leadership as well, are too scanty to ensure quiet, confident, systematic work. What has been said about the theatre applies equally here. Neither state nor municipalities trouble themselves about the matter, and the subsidised orchestras like the Birmingham City Orchestra or the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra are very unusual exceptions. In any case, where such financial assistance has been forthcoming, the success achieved has been encouraging. It is obvious that England could make rapid progress if she could adopt our continental system. The public could be relied on. But the prospects of such a course are not hopeful, and for that many people look for progress not so much in professional as in amateur music. And as in everything which has to do with play, it is amateur work, the production of the playing masses, which is the most important feature of the popular movement. So far there are few amateur orchestras, and some of them one hears are still pretty bad, but even here a vigorous movement is afoot, which is not at all in accord with one's preconceived ideas of English life. Music clubs are being formed in towns and villages throughout the country, and here and there new amateur orchestras and glee-parties crop up, their ambition fired and their standards raised by festivals and competitions.

direction co-operation and organisation have proved both useful and very necessary. Only thus could instruments and music be got together, and satisfactory conductors obtained. Whatever severe critics may think of the actual value of the performances, the important thing is the movement itself and its very promising possibilities for the future.

English capacity for great musical performance, even under present conditions, can be gauged by the standard of part-song and chorus music ; this is in full vigour to-day and maintained a high level even during the depression of the nineteenth century. What English part-singers can do has been seen in Germany, in the performances of the Newcastle Singers in Frankfurt and other towns. The Newcastle choir is only one of many. The real musical talent of the English lies in vocal music, and especially in part-singing. No great obstacles stand in the way of its development : all that is required is a throat and a musical nature. It is significant that this form of art, in its nature simple, naïve and spontaneous, has been practised and intensively cultivated in England from the earliest centuries of our era. Primeval folk-melodies, folk-dances and mysteries were the sources of this art, and all the complex musical forms and expressions have gradually developed from them. The English remained loyal to these pristine forms, and no judgment of English character and culture could be justified which did not take into account, besides the Stock Exchange, international trade and party

politics, this particular trait. And by this is meant the harmony that exists between English play of to-day and the great artistic past, the result of tradition and conscious effort. There are few nations who can point to a richer artistic heritage in song, rhythm, and speech, than the English, taken either in the narrower sense, or as a whole people embracing the Scots, Welsh and Irish. Moreover, there is scarcely another nation which stands in such close association with these ancient forms of art. Even the most modern English compositions—and their international prestige increases daily—continue to draw their inspiration from the fountain-head of old folk-melodies and rhythms. They have the breadth, greatness, and permanence of their own landscapes, whose storms and peaceful summer nights gave them birth. They sprang from hearth and altar, from stream and lake, or from the lonely fastnesses of the Highlands. These songs, choruses and hymns, religious and secular, have survived the barrenness of the Puritan period as vigorously as they have defied the ugly desolation of industrialism.

The churches, and especially the Welsh chapels, have had a considerable share in preserving this musical tradition. Social life in Wales, which is inhabited by one of the most music-loving peoples in the world, would be unthinkable without the chapel and its choir. There choral singing is the most natural expression of the emotions of a people who are deeply religious, but artistically by no means highly developed, nor even trained.

Welsh church music illustrates most clearly wherein lie the peculiar musical cravings of the majority of the English people ; it also demonstrates why such aspirations are not readily amenable to artistic processes in which intellectualism predominates. The Welsh people sang itself into religious independence of the Anglican Church ; and when they got disestablishment they were thrown on their own resources for the creation of a new service and new church music. But the English Churches have also made music and, with the co-operation of the congregation, church-music into an essential part of the church life, and this was necessary, for such aids to æsthetic enjoyment were required to fill the churches. Everywhere you find new things being tried or performed, and the churches are only too ready to place their accommodation at the disposal of the movement. St. Martin's in the Fields not only yields its narrow courtyard to the mercy of cricketers, but leads the way in making God's house a musical centre. Nor is the line drawn at sacred music : both churches and chapels encourage music, as they do drama, if for no other reason than in the interests of popular culture. Thus the masses of Bach, Beethoven, or Berlioz can be heard at St. Paul's, Westminster Abbey, and in numerous smaller churches, even the smallest. But in addition to this some of them, which may be regarded as centres of the cult, are gradually and quite naturally becoming the homes of good secular music. And if the churches gain popularity thereby, surely this can only be due

to the Englishman's real reverence for music. During the lunch hour many a city church is filled to the last seat. This is not especially on the days when a popular parson discourses on daily life, and the problems of the hour ; it is on account of the lunch-hour music. This may be an organ recital, chamber music, or a chorale. The St. Michael's Singers enliven the grayness of Cornhill with choral music—Bach, Vaughan Williams, Verdi, Parry, and the like. Most of them are city clerks, like the hundreds who listen to them. The numerous little city churches sandwiched in here and there among banks and business houses throughout the city have gained a new justification for existence through this musical revival.

The Roman Catholic cathedral at Westminster is famous throughout the world for its choral music, but individual Anglican churches now have regular musical festivals which, though they do not appear in the amusement columns of the newspapers, make very valuable contributions to the musical life of the nation. Notable in this respect are the monthly concerts in Southwark Cathedral in South London, which is regularly filled to overflowing, although it has accommodation for some 3000 people. The programme is not restricted to Passion music and requiems, but sometimes includes a quintette by Mozart, a string quartette by Ravel, Byrd's Mass for Five Voices, in addition to Motets by Palestrina, Vittoria, Lassus, and Croce. For great chorales and instrumental music the

cathedral choir works in conjunction with the London Symphony Orchestra. There are few places where serious and classical music of the first order is given with such regularity.

As with the drama, so with England's musical revival, it is the village which shows the most characteristic phase of the movement. There you see most clearly how a rich modern musical culture can evolve spontaneously out of folk-songs and sea chanties as soon as a spark fires the train. And what causes the spark? It is the same thing as we have noticed before: the remotest village is caught up in this enthusiasm for self-emancipation. Songs, dancing, local galas are the beginning, often in association with the dramatic revival of which we have spoken; then follow ambition, enthusiasm, efficiency: at first they play and sing Sullivan, but in course of time Bach. First an orchestra or a choir is established, advice and help are sought from elsewhere, then they travel round the district, even to the remote villages. A union founded in 1919, under the name of the Village and Country Town Concerts Fund sends its concert parties all over the country. Its efforts have been the most conspicuous in awakening this new joy in music. These parties were welcomed everywhere. They give hundreds of concerts annually, Handel, Purcell, Mozart, Chopin, Brahms, Elgar, Parry. Very often the whole village attends, and people come in from miles around to hear them. The desire to perform, or at least to hear, music arises quite spontaneously.

MUSICAL TRADITION IN ENGLAND 191

The influence of the gramophone, and of late the wireless, works in the same direction. Both stimulate and educate if confined within proper channels. The British Broadcasting Company has entrusted its musical direction to Percy Pitt, who in the past has done such good work behind the scenes at Covent Garden.



MUSIC AS SPORT

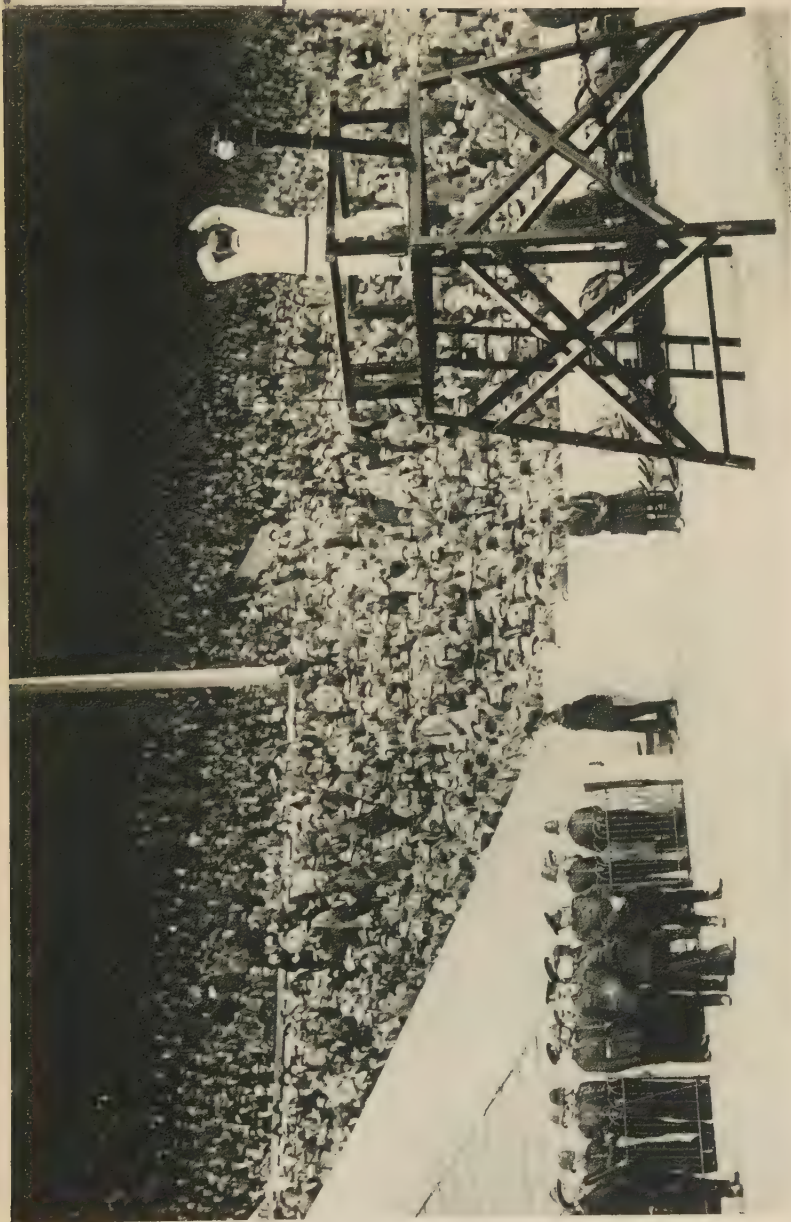
NOTHING has contributed so much towards the rapidity and strength of the new movement as the English love of friendly rivalry. The last few years a craze for musical competition has arisen which almost verges on a musical epidemic. If it appears in strange guises it must be remembered that this is a wide, popular movement, and not a matter of skilled performance by a cultured minority. In this respect music follows the example of sport. These contests which began in a small way shortly before the war are nowadays very popular. In fact musical competitions and festivals have acquired a scope and importance in the last few years which few could have expected of this "land without music." Festivals and competitions can be counted by dozens and hundreds. Thousands take active part in them, and thousands flock to hear them. Contests take place between towns, counties, provinces, even nations. Class cups are as eagerly fought for as provincial trophies. While there is no lack of enthusiasm, burning zeal or patriotism, artistic feeling is by no means absent. In short the devotees of music are determined to take their part in national campaigns which in the past seemed confined to athleticism. The

methods by which this is being accomplished are entirely English. We have seen how farmers, dealers, and squires from every quarter of the neighbourhood flock to the Agricultural Shows to spend a few enjoyable days ; and how schools and sports-clubs collect at Henley for a week of gaiety and competition. In the same way thousands of musical people flock to these musical festivals. They comprise professionals, amateurs, critics and conductors ; men, women and children ; choruses and soloists, fiddlers and orchestras. They all come together in friendship and amicable rivalry, filled only with one thought, to enjoy the day, and to be jolly musical Britons rather than personal rivals. The spirit of the festival is similar to that of a great national sporting event. It helps England to become a nation instead of a mass of individuals.

Unity in physical and artistic play has never ceased to be a feature of the various Eisteddfods in Wales. The same is true of the corresponding national festivals in Scotland and Ireland, whose nearest continental parallels are perhaps Switzerland's *Ring und Schwing* gatherings. Every kind of national characteristic then comes to the surface in the shape of costume, song, dance and games. England aims at keeping up these national festivals, and rendering them more beautiful, but apart from this aspect, she is determined to hold and encourage these exhibitions and competitions with a view to stimulating every form of popular culture : here it is an Easter hockey-festival, there a musical gala

or a competition in popular drama. It is even possible in London to witness a national mouth-organ championship. The Crystal Palace is not too large for these gatherings. Margate, a little seaside town on the east coast, tried to get no less a person than Bruno Walter for its next series of festivals. This was not in the nature of advertising propaganda ; the people just want to play, and listen to, good music. The third annual musical competition at Brighton drew nearly 4000 competitors : 332 pianists, 274 soloists, 10 organists, 170 reciters, 51 folk-dance teams, 27 brass and military bands, 65 singing classes and choirs. Three of the brass bands belonged to the London police. The mayor, in opening the contest, announced that now every industrial undertaking in the town had its own workmen's and employees' band. The Brighton contest is only one example of innumerable similar functions, and the mayor's remarks about the workmen's bands apply equally to other towns. The greatest musicians in the country are ready to give their services to these musical competitions, most of which are now embodied in the British Federation of Musical Competition Festivals, after the manner of the great sports associations. The average number of active members is said to be 1700. The actual numbers range from 150 in the small village festivals to 12,000 in the large towns. Since ambition has been aroused the movement has progressed by leaps and bounds. On all sides musical and dramatic societies are founded by the staffs of banks, business

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COMMUNITY SINGING

houses and factories ; side by side with the sports clubs, choirs and orchestras are springing up everywhere. In certain factories singing has recently been introduced during work, and is said to have improved the general tone without detriment to efficiency.

Wherever the English congregate in large numbers they are inclined to break into song, sometimes in the unison of a primitive sing-song, sometimes in harmony. Recently this fact has been exploited by the London press in one of the usual stunts. The *Daily Express* organises "community singing," collective singing by great masses of people, in the Albert Hall, Hyde Park, at the Stadium at Wembley, and elsewhere. A conductor in white trousers and tennis shirt mounts the rostrum and compels tens of thousands to musical expression. A certain amount of training takes place ; first the women, then the men, first the tenors, then the basses, first the left half, then the right ; then the whole crowd bursts forth. The press had no occasion to get mixed up in matters of this sort, had not the inclination been there already. This London community singing is organised, but it is only an imitation of what happens spontaneously elsewhere. There is hardly a football crowd in Wales or Yorkshire, or any waiting crowd, which does not break into one of the people's numerous, often moving, hymns ; these are well known from the chapels and the masses find their expression in singing them. They used to be heard in London, but the old intimate

acquaintanceship with religious tunes is now a thing of the past. So they descended to something a bit lower, comic songs, or they just hummed and whistled, and the effect is very surprising when forty or eighty thousand people join in. If the *Daily Express* teaches the London crowd to know its songs better, the stunt may be forgiven.



MUSIC AND EDUCATION

BELIEF in the ethical and cultural value of music, or, in plainer words, the value of music as a means of understanding between men and between nations, has long been prevalent in England. So much so that the cultivation of musical appreciation and expression has become an important subject in the schools. Play of the æsthetic kind of course takes a modest place compared with ordinary school sports, but still it takes one. This is the case in Board Schools, Secondary Schools, Continuation Schools, at the Universities, in the Settlements, boys' clubs, even in reformatories and prisons. For years the English have organised this side of their play with deliberate intent. The Board of Education, referred to in a previous chapter in connection with its good work on the dramatic side, has long recognised that music has a far wider scope than a mere appeal to the senses. Much pioneer work in this direction has been done by people like Sir Henry Hadow, not only a great scholar, but a tireless worker for sound musical culture. He sits on all the committees and societies which work to this end. His theory is that music "is not only a source of noble pleasure, it is a form of intellectual and spiritual training which we cannot afford to neglect." Speaking

at the Imperial Educational Conference in the summer of 1927, he continues, " Music is quite as good a language as French or Latin, quite as effective a form of intellectual discipline as any problem in science or mathematics. The language of music is no less deserving of study than the language of Bacon or Shakespeare." These are not the words of a man who is centuries in advance of his time. What Sir Henry says here is practically the conviction of all leaders of culture in England, and what is more, it is put into practice.

In the Board Schools, no less than in the higher schools, the main idea is to develop singing and the love of it. The children are taught to read music. The difficulty in the Board Schools is often to get proper teaching. It is hoped to remedy the defect by making music an optional subject at the training colleges. Numerous educational authorities possess skilled advisers and musical directors, whose function it is to supervise and control musical education in the hundreds of schools under their charge. School concerts and concerts for young people are frequently organised, and when the children leave school they find the continuation schools ready to take up the work where it was left off, and to give further encouragement to the love of music. Among the higher grade schools the public schools in particular are, according to qualified observers, particularly favourable to the plan of giving music an established place in the school curriculum. " In many of these schools," says an official report, " the music teacher

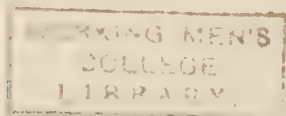
is a regular member of the staff, and is often a man with an academic degree." According to the same report, the school concerts reach a satisfactorily high standard. The progress made at the public schools is naturally reflected at the universities to which the schoolboy passes in due course. Several of these have chairs of music.

Several very comprehensive organisations exist for the furtherance of music, the greatest being the British Music Society. It has a special educational branch, and is affiliated to the Conference of Educational Associations. The Workers' Educational Association, the National Federation of Women's Institutes, the Y.M.C.A., and the Adult School Union work in the same direction. In Wales the National Council of Music, closely associated with the University of Wales, supervises the music teaching in schools and universities with commendable results.

No one will be prone to overrate the significance of all these councils and associations, for whether a person is musical or not depends on nature and not on a council. But a century or so ago these things did not exist in England. They have come into being in response to a feeling that there were qualities in the British character which were neglected and undeveloped. The English have a firm belief not only in their love of music, but in their musical capacity. They would not devote all this time which they could spend in other kinds of play if they had not been impressed by the revival of music at the end of last century. They

realise that it is worth while for the English to follow their ancient traditions. Their aim is not particularly to produce a new generation of artists and composers as successful as those of other nations. They want to bring about the old fusion of æsthetic play and national life. They aim at a general enrichment of culture. They feel that something bigger can emerge from their inherited play attitude than sports records. They are happy enough when they find English character responding here and there, sometimes with enthusiasm, to encouragement and instruction. And they do not mind whether it be drama, music, or natural æsthetic progress in art and handicraft. Even athletes, even the "bad hats" of the public schools, even the fallen and the prisoner, sometimes respond to the music of the spheres which reaches them in the rhythm of word, song or movement. Wherever man is chained, spiritually or physically, even behind the prison bars, England tries to give him a chance to hear this new message.

In a report on the effect of dramatic recitation in an English prison an observer remarks: "I remember one occasion when many of the prisoners broke down. I was rather shocked at the time, but I think now that it was a good thing. They had begun to feel, and when that happens, one can do quite a lot with them." Such is the state of millions of neglected beings, and such is the meaning of the whole movement.



THE GAME OF LIFE

SENSE OF HUMOUR

WE have seen that the game is an essential part of English life, and conversely English life is a game. England possesses much which harks back to ancient culture ; much on the other hand created by the people from its own instinct, and to meet its own special needs. Ancient usage is accommodated to modern circumstance. But one thing stands out as eminently English, and no time and no other people have brought it to such significance and effectiveness, the will to gaiety, the play-attitude towards all life's problems. Play lies hidden in all human nature, however differently various peoples express it ; it is by no means the exclusive perquisite of English character. But nowhere to the same degree as in England has it developed into a practical philosophy of life. The Englishman plays with himself and with his life. He performs his life like an opera or a play ; a courageous playwright, he hides the tragedy of existence behind the tinsel and jest of comedy. Now and again tragedy peeps out in a weird and terrible manner. To live thus is a work of art, but every Englishman is not an artist, and so, often enough, the play becomes wretched farce or hypocritical melodrama. But on the whole life's artists have it ; they laugh cheerfully over misfortune, avoid tragic conflicts,

and rejoice the more understandingly over their joy. They laugh at themselves ; often they take themselves very seriously, but they do it as if they did not. Theirs is an unquenchable optimism, born of a belief not so much in themselves as in things in general—it will be all right in the end. Hence the inclination to let things take their own course. “ *Laissez faire* ” is part of the national character. That England, despite all her Conservatism, has an unfailing Liberal tendency is not merit but a matter of temperament. Whatever the disadvantages of the play-attitude, taken in its widest sense, the English owe it a very material debt ; for to them it means health, strength and joy, and these are the foundations of social well-being. He laughs best who laughs at himself. The English prove it. They are led safely through life by their sense of humour. A jest carries them through the most painful situations, and a joke often attains the acme of truth. But this attitude is purely formal and superficial. The British jester is no hypocrite, either towards himself or others. He knows how to be silent, but he knows how to talk as well. Humour is one of the finest aids to self-expression. In *Punch*, founded in 1841, England has for generations possessed a medium unparalleled in any other country, for expressing truth in the guise of jest. Nations have good humorous and satiric papers, but nowhere has one of them become such a national institution as *Punch*. There have been times when it has been more active and therefore more effective in politics than

to-day, but this paper was never more popular and never more widely read. Its circulation has very greatly increased of late years. While *Punch* has not become entirely unpolitical, the mirror it holds up to mankind tends rather to reflect contemporary men than contemporary politicians. Its objective has always been to express the voice of the nation, its judgment and its sentiments, in a language so happy and unforced that nothing but affection results. Only in a country where self-criticism and love of truth are highly developed can a paper like *Punch* become a national institution, and the measure of tact and good-humour behind all the jokes is such as is not often met with. It harbours no bitterness, hatred, nor ill-will, and does not try to be clever at the expense of others ; and this attitude is just the characteristic of English humour. If a foreigner does not understand *Punch*, he generally feels it is because he is not *au courant* with the local topics and conditions dealt with. This may often be the case, but it is also in a large measure because the foreigner is unable to appreciate the special flavour of English wit. While all true humour is unsubstantial, the English is quite unreal. It is greatest and most typical when it means nothing—merely the gentlest hint of an intangible whimsy. Such jests have no point. You would have to write a book to explain them. But the English mind senses the comic in them ; the Englishman sees himself and his weaknesses. And right royally he laughs at them. Perhaps at nothing at all, but still he laughs. He

reads into them just what he wants to. He laughs, as children laugh, from sheer instinct. There seems to be no food for thought in these jests, only something to see and feel. It is social, community-feeling; this art of humour even amounts to a national bond. Floods of ill-will pour themselves away through the vent. No bitterness remains, for such humour has no venom. It is the finest principle in English tradition that personal honour is inviolable. Public life is innocent of personal calumny. The English judge and English law protect the person and the honour of every Englishman, whoever he may be. The victim of calumny has a right to damages, and the amounts awarded reach large figures. Thus life, jest, and satire are purified of their poisons in so far as English character is not in itself a sufficient protection.

Yes, life's a game, and whatever game the Englishman plays he finds stout opponents. But his motto is always the same. Play it in honour. Fair Play.



THE POLITICAL GAME

IT is in the play-attitude that the Englishman walks onto the games-field of politics, clad in his sense of humour, sceptical, and at the same time optimistic. His object is not to fight ; all he wants is a bit of good-humoured sport. The political tournament opens and closes on the model of any of the recognised games. The Englishman is no political rationalist acquiring his everyday common sense from some political school of tradition ; he is a born sportsman who comes to Westminster equipped with his experience of the playing-field. And, as in every recognised game, politics must be a match between two parties for the man in the street to understand it. It is a friendly match where public opinion occupies the place of both audience and referee, just as the football crowd or the boxing confraternity at Premierland is the real conscience of the combatants. At the elections the public consider both parties, and choose the one which in the opinion of the audience has played the better and fairer game, or promises to do so. This interpretation is no metaphor or extravaganza ; every Englishman recognises it as a fact. And as politics are a contest, a game, a match, English instinct demands that there shall be two parties and no more. No English game has three sides,

and therefore there can't be three parties. The English are accustomed from childhood to decide for one side or another. They choose between the dark blue of Oxford and the light blue of Cambridge ; then they go it hammer and tongs for their respective colours. It is true that in racing there are a dozen horses and as many colours, but that is merely for purposes of show and betting. Such sport has not the true ethical worth of a sporting fight of man against man, or better team against team. Politics would be an absurdity if it followed the example of a horse race, but, regarded as a match, it has deep significance.

In the House of Commons at Westminster the people's representatives do not sit in a semicircle before a Government rostrum and a Speaker's desk, as in the German Reichstag ; the party in power sits on long benches facing the opposition, while the Speaker, who is president and umpire, is enthroned at one end between the two parties. The Cabinet ministers sit among their team, on the front bench, and their rivals sit opposite and wait for an opening to strike, just as a boxer does ; but in both cases rules and good form must be observed. Both at question time, and in the long speeches of debate there are feints, enticements, traps and minor finesses which are as important as hefty hacks and final knock-out blows. A good thrust wins applause, no matter who makes or receives it. The speeches usually have no declamation about them, but the speaker tries to upset his opponent's arguments and win a point for his own

side. Hence the special importance of a good Leader of the Opposition. But while a football club searches high and low for the best possible centre-forward, parties nowadays have often less freedom of choice ; the party machine, powerful interests, or trade organisations, have to be reckoned with. The greatest difficulty here as elsewhere is that the greatest tacticians are not necessarily the best strategists, and vice versa. Practice in the political game begins at an early age, at school, in the university debating societies, and more recently in the equivalent training-classes of the workers. Hence it comes about that the numbers capable of taking a hand in the active parliamentary game, or on the political platform, are much greater than in other countries, where trained advocates have often to be resorted to. But special training for political debate often supplies clever words and crafty arguments, and nothing beyond. The difference between the front-bench players and the average back-bencher is often astonishing. The debates in the House of Commons usually become painfully boring if the champions leave the field to the rank and file for an hour or two. Tedious as these people often are, they are the most meticulous observers of the rules.

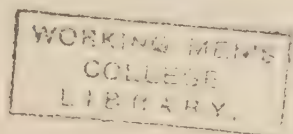
In the heat of the moment the most eminent English statesmen and parliamentarians have at times forgotten fair play. At such times both books and insults have flown and occasionally, as in the case of a certain eminent statesman, it

has been made a point of duty not to apologise, quite contrary to the regular English rule. To-day one often hears the lament that the political tone in the country and in Parliament has gone down since uneducated and occasionally uncouth Labour members have flooded Westminster. There is some truth in this, but the number of serious conflicts is small, and is really not very much greater than in certain stormy days of the past when the ranks of the well educated were undiluted. As a matter of fact the Speaker has only to rise majestically from his chair to silence the most turbulent offender in a couple of seconds. It is unnecessary to sound a peal in the belfry or provide the Speaker with a battery of electric bells. And while this is the case the tone and standards of English politicians will always remain *sui generis*. Here are rules which are observed.

This play-attitude towards politics not only sets the political tone on a reasonable note, but it has a very definite material advantage of obtaining practical results from the play and counterplay of opinions and interests. As musical rhythm only gains reality and shape when it takes its time from the metronome, so the Government in power only exists by virtue of its relation to the opposition. However great a Government's majority may be it will always find the stream of its activity—the rhythm of its policy—limited by the tempo prescribed by the common will of both parties. Such reference to a common denominator is called “national” politics, which means what in the last

resort all England will accept or possibly what is the most they are likely to put up with. The political programme which any Government proposes to carry out—to use our metaphor, its political rhythm—may often depart very widely from that common basis. Moreover, it must do so if it is to be productive and retain its character ; but too wide a departure will never be tolerated. Error and bravado may try to disturb this relation but in politics the result is short-lived. Elections and change of Government soon restore the equilibrium. Hence there is a clear distinction between a party's programme and what it attempts to put into practice when it gets into power.

English politics often appear insincere and untrue. But the English parliamentary system would become a foolish dictatorship, a constant change of fundamental laws with corresponding reversals when the other party came into power, if the parties did not practice this self-denial. They succeed because they don't take politics too seriously, but try rather to make it the finest game in their lives. The country's great problem is whether, with the growth of the Labour Party, the game is still possible under its old rules. But so far it appears that the Labour Leaders are quite ready to fall in with the traditional "time," to play the game as the English are wont to play it, if with a somewhat freer rhythm.



ENGLISH LIFE

ON the football field, at the music hall, in the street, on the river, or at Westminster, it's the same life, and they are the same people. Everywhere there's the same laughter, light-heartedness, readiness to play. We must not let ourselves be deceived by earnest faces and controlled expressions. The few English we know are not the English people. The national temperament is evidenced in the politeness and pleasantness which, with few exceptions, characterise all classes of English people ; it appears in the unshakeable good-humour of the crowd waiting jammed together for hours when there is anything to be seen. Nothing upsets their temper, even if they are disappointed, if it pours with rain, if their feet are tired, if they lose their trains, or when things look their blackest. We see the charm of the sporting attitude in the unaffected pride and cheerful bearing of the shopgirl, tripping merrily through life in her silk stockings, no matter what troubles lie in the background. Nowhere in the world do eyes flash more brightly, or teeth, be they true or false, flash so bravely, as in the London suburbs. And it's the play-attitude which takes all the heaviness out of flirtation, talk, politics, art, literature, knowledge, everything in fact. All England seems to be endowed with

handsome clothes, gracious form and a playful spirit ; even the better-class criminal cuts a dash and talks pleasantly. Up to the moment when sentence is passed he seems almost a gentleman. The common, the tragic, the problematic, the depths of life, are light-heartedly ignored ; at least no one wears his troubles on his sleeve. Behind the triflings of flirtation honour may lie shattered in fragments ; the brow which seems to worry about nothing more than a casual, " It's a fine day," may be tormented by sorrow or distracting problems ; the cheerful parry and thrust of political debate may conceal profound statesmanship ; the light-footed muse of English art and literature may deceive us as profoundly as Mozart's. It is indeed to few that the wealth of British character and national life are an open book. These things are deeply hidden. Many, and indeed very many, may have no share in these riches ; they enjoy the happy exterior and perhaps not even that. Thousands are content with appearances : they wear good clothes, behave well, make themselves pleasant ; they try to be merry themselves, and make others merry with them. They keep their troubles to themselves, they only touch what can be enjoyed, spend their lives in pleasant competition and harmless debates ; they entertain, and are entertained. The Press, financiers, writers, artists, all swim in this stream, and as it bears them along they strengthen the observer's impression of its fleeting nature. The tendency to superficiality is not thus awakened, for it was there

already, but it is enhanced and made permanent. The theatres and orchestras play something light, artists of every kind produce ephemeral works, the Press depicts life as if it were merely a shell. We seem to be surrounded by empty chatter. Even the best writers in the country write page after page, thousands upon thousands of words, without seeming to give us anything more tangible than this same endless babble. They maunder on, touching on thousands of things, on everything, in fact.

Those who see, read and know no more than this, who realise only the superficies of English life, and gauge the play-attitude merely by cricket and football, may reasonably ask, "To what end? Are all these people triflers? Are they all stupid and empty, and only we others deep and sensible? Does England consist of millions, forty millions, of fools, and only a handful worth talking to? Are they all simpletons, fit only to do a bit of business with, or capable of playing a match and nothing else?" There are English people who ask themselves these questions, and answer them in the affirmative. But among them there are not a few who have little or no understanding of their own people. English life is more difficult to understand than most Europeans think. People agree readily enough that what is called "the English mentality," and still more English politics, are difficult to grasp, but the life, they think, is easy enough to understand. To me it seems just the opposite. Nothing is more deceptive than the superficial picture which the manner of life presents

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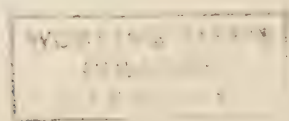


ETON BOYS

to the casual observer. The English "blockhead" who is a sportsman and no more is almost proverbial. It's quite easy to say that this people has no intellectual interests. But its interests are of another kind, they express themselves in a different manner, they fall into a different intellectual category. We make varied demands of life. Even in sport we don't all agree. Educational principles are everywhere different, so are the methods of work, the processes of thought. The Englishman thinks and works instinctively, the German in the main, methodically. Even if it were not so convenient to know nothing, the Englishman would impair his natural value, his intuitive power, if he suddenly changed over to the German method. Intuition is impossible if clogged by masses of speculation and knowledge. It is equally impossible when burdened with self-criticism and self-torment. Instinct is the gift of nature, and the cult of nature is the deeper meaning of all English life. The Englishman's highest ambition is a compromise between body and mind. It is puritanism that has done most to fog us, and the Englishman too, with regard to the natural form of English life; meanwhile, the sudden gigantic growth of the population has enormously increased all the English weaknesses and failings.

We have been deceived by the simplicity of the processes of English thought, and of her intellectual aspirations. For the English have maintained both in art and literature the modest tradition of the play-attitude. And they did so while other

countries were aiming at something newer, greater, a complication of thought processes, of language, and artistic expression. These things, however, made claims upon the intelligence, which were certainly abnormal, and doubts may be entertained as to their reasonableness. These are paths in which the English cannot and will not follow. Modern thought, in the continental sense, especially in literature, is so opposed to the essential English character that it only finds a responsive echo amongst the very few. A number of highbrows make literary and artistic experiments, but they do not count for much ; nor have they much claim on posterity, for their products are an abnormality, neither natural, naïve, nor English. For reasons such as these, continental judgment has necessarily been wont to pass censure on the English, for herein England seemed barren and reactionary. Moreover, the older generation usually possessed a style in art, and notably in music, very much resembling the over-elaborate German furniture of the eighties. Such products are the butt of the highbrows, and the existence of this old tendency is quite enough to justify the low esteem in which England's artistic powers have been held during the last sixty years. Artistic standards had drifted as far from the popular sense as the intelligentsia have to-day. Only "good form," taste in clothes, and decent manners seemed to remain from the wreck. Still, we have the younger generation, and it demands something better.



A FORECAST

THERE is a new spirit in England, and the high-brows, pedants, and culture-fiends in other countries can rest assured that England even to-day can discriminate between Wagner and a football match. But this point must be borne in mind : in England, more than in any other great country, the common origin of athletic and artistic play is now vindicated, or better, is revindicated. A game in the sports sense, and play in the artistic, owe their ultimate origin and value to the common craving for activity. The connection between the two is most obvious where the athletic and artistic sides are thoroughly fused as in folk-dancing. The stimulating effect on the spectator of all such performances is only a matter of degree, perhaps of the finest shade. Moreover, English representations of the more intellectual order, such as plays and theatrical performances, indicate that the nation's genius consists in lightness of touch. To the English, Bernard Shaw is neither a dramatist nor a poet, but merely a playwright. His muse does not stalk in buskins, but discourses with wit and elegance about life and things. His position in England is entirely due to his happy combination of amusing dialogue with moral educational theory, while Germany racks her brains to decide whether he is a poet or

not. Well may Shaw exclaim, "Good Lord, I'm a journalist!" Even a Shakespeare would be impossible in England if his powerful dramatic sense were not consistently tempered with natural English feeling. The playful manner adopted by the English stage is in very marked contrast to the pompous seriousness of most German presentations. "The characteristically joyous attitude, the human freedom, the unconstrained renaissance spirit," says Friedrich Gundolf, speaking of the German attitude towards Shakespearean plays in the seventeenth century, "could not be communicated in Germany, because there was no quality in the German mind to correspond to such things." Or as an Englishman of those days put it, "The German is too holy, for he makes his ordinary stage characters say things which ought only to come from the preacher in his pulpit." It is true that little of the seventeenth century spirit remains to be seen on the surface of the contemporary England. Since then there have been days in which the Briton put the rest of the world in the shade for holiness, yet deep down the treasure was kept unimpaired, and now a new period of humanism seems to be ensuing.

The English renaissance has been called a culture of chivalry and the court, and George Brandes has made the discovery that Shakespeare was an enemy of the people. May not this be an exaggeration for the sake of principle? The folk-songs, folk-dances and folk-theatre of that time seem to contradict such an assertion. Should English culture

contemplate a new renaissance, this will have little to do with lords and knights ; nor will it be the production of a superior class of intellectuals ; it will be born of the people itself, and will spring from an atmosphere of song, dance, laughter and play. And if the inter-relationship of these things can be believed in, then the movement we are considering has a deeper significance than even its participants would be likely to concede. Puritanism and subsequently industrial hypertrophy have covered the fruitful fields with a thick crust of lava. Cant may easily be got rid of, but the mad increase of the population, which means nothing but a gigantic multiplication of the proletariat, has made every attempt at revival wellnigh impossible. Cricket, golf, lawn-tennis, bowls, mixed bathing, dancing, and community singing are the most important attractions the Parks Committee of the London County Council have instituted for the amusement of the masses in the London parks for the summer of 1927. Add a million wireless sets, thousands of cinemas, hundreds of thousands of gramophones, music halls, and palaces of varieties, and you have a complete picture of the culture which millions enjoy, and is typical of modern England. Whoever visits London to-day, or even merely reads the English press, naturally reaches the conclusion that these things alone are typical of England, its demands and its possibilities. It is true that popular judgment will concede a few scholars, a few savants, together with an artist and a reformer or two. But apart from that nothing

but matches, musical comedies, and similar fooleries. A country, a metropolis, or a people which creates such an impression, has largely itself and no one else to blame. But really, this veil is worth peeping through.

Perhaps the new movement is but a flash in the pan. It may be that the revival of national culture and of amateur play will be swallowed up in a wave of vulgarity and bad taste. It may be, but it must not be. The history of the people can scarcely tolerate such an outcome. There is no room for doubt that the desire for self-realisation, self-expression, the creative impulse of the play-attitude, are real, spontaneous and powerful. The least result must be that national culture will broaden down to lower strata than has been the case in the last hundred and fifty or two hundred years. The aim is not for personal laurels, nor any gigantic intellectual feat. But the hopeless chasm between those who call themselves leaders of culture and the masses of the people, in whose breasts the divine seed lies hid, may narrow a little for a time. The people will become direct participants again, and from the stirring of the depths of popular power something great may arise. Such a stirring made possible the marvel of the Elizabethan period. What England did then was of universal value, super-national in the highest sense, just human. On the other hand, Puritan England was incomprehensible to us continentals. It produced and fostered all those characteristics and peculiarities of which many of the English are so proud, but

which divided the ruling classes from the majority of their own people, as they are divided from us to-day. When the nations have rediscovered their true selves, we shall all be able to understand each other better. After all, even culture has a right to Fair Play.

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